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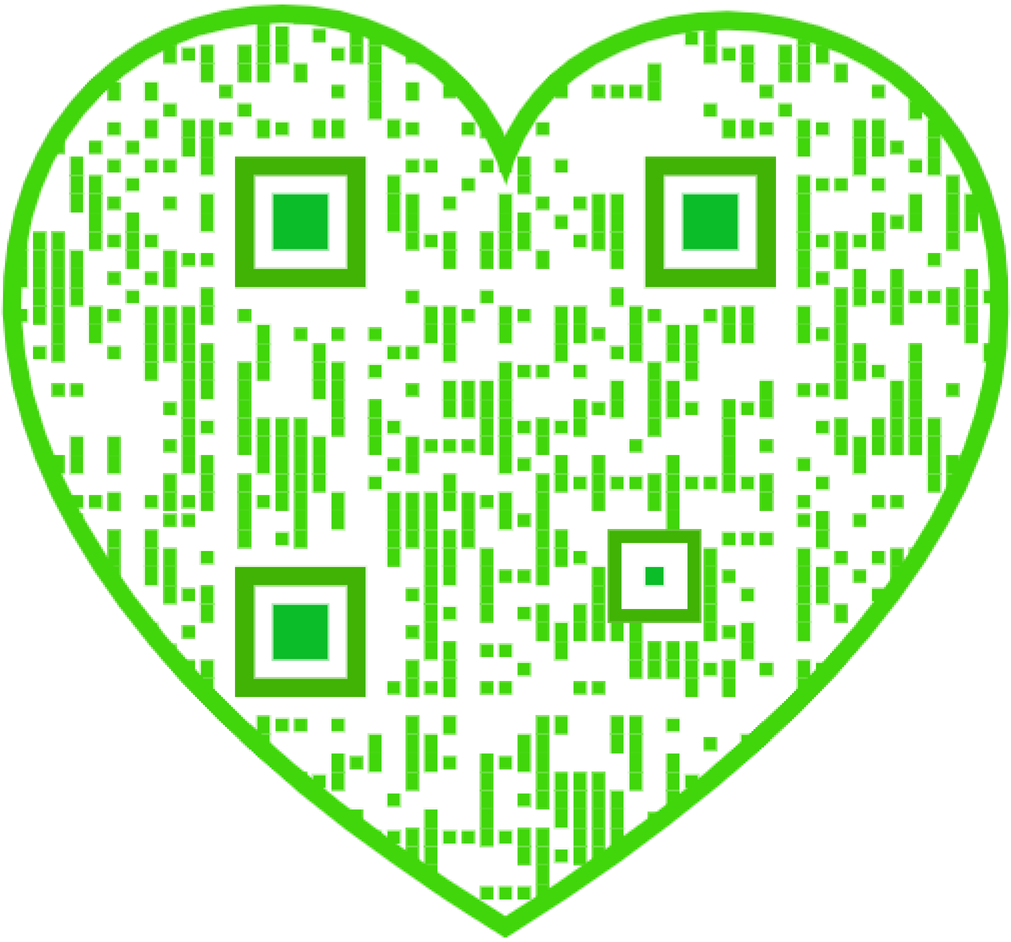

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EDITORIAL
Editor: Mike O'Connor
mikeoconnor@yaffa.com.au
Contributing Editors: Mick Fletoridis,
Rob Ditessa, Drew Hopper,
Anthony McKee and Saima Morel.

ADVERTISING
National Sales Manager: Jodie Reid
(02) 9213 8261 jodiereid@yaffa.com.au
Advertising Production: John Viskovich
(02) 9213 8215 johnviskovich@yaffa.com.au

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ISSN 0004-9964

Like it or not, video is here to stay, and social media will do everything it can to keep it that way.

WILL WE STILL NEED STILLS?

MIKE O'CONNOR, EDITOR

Have you ever considered just how much video content you consume these days?

In my own experience, the combination of clever algorithms that increasingly promote short form video over other content types means my social media feed is bursting at the seams with more video content than ever. Maybe it started around the time Instagram declared itself as being no longer a stills image platform, but in recent years it feels like video content is everywhere your eyes look.

The social media world of photography has changed monumentally as a result. Where in the past it felt like the recommended posts in my feed would be a bunch of imagery I might like, today it's overwhelmingly photographers speaking to the camera about what is is they're photographing, how they edit an image, why you need to shoot raw, or any other thing designed to keep you watching. Everyone seems to do it, and its inescapable.

All this clearly works too – the stats tell us we're creating and watching more video content than ever before, and its only going to increase further.

As someone whose job is intricately linked to the still format in the traditional sense, I'm perhaps more conscious of this change than most, and it makes me wonder – what does all this video content mean for photography? When we are exposed to less and less of something, do we value it in the same way? And can a still image ever have the same ability to wow us as a video of the same event?

Of course photography has successfully stood the test of time so far. It has a long history, and it's more democratic and accessible than ever. New technologies like high frame rate video, 3D, artificial intelligence and other developments, haven't "killed" it, with these forms arguably just entrenching photography further as an artform. And of course a still image can wow us just as effectively as a video if done with skill and creativity.

Call me a purist, but just because Zuckerberg and co want us to engage with video doesn't make the format of stills any less important. But perhaps what we do need is to reconsider the way we engage with our stills – whether that's through printing more of our work, viewing it in books and on walls, or just switching off social media entirely for a bit. What is clear is we've never had more options for how we use our time, and it's up to us to decide what this looks like. ✪

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THIS ISSUE'S COVER

Captured by photographer Robert Morello at an undisclosed location in Tasmania, he tells us he knew this location had great potential for an image. "Although small in size, the waterfall was very big in character and charm," he says. However, on arrival it was clear that several large trees were covering the compositions he had in mind. The result was he had to get low and close to capture this powerful and beautiful scene. "It's a great lesson in landscape photography – often you are at the mercy of mother nature and she forces you to adapt," he says. Canon R5, Canon RF15-35mm F2.8 L IS USM lens @ 15mm. 0.3s @ f8, ISO 100.

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INTO THE BLIZZARD

PHOTOGRAPHER: JOSH HOLKO

This photograph is of a Blue Morph Arctic Fox in the Hornstrandir Nature Reserve in the far northwest of Iceland during a winter blizzard.

The fox, seemingly oblivious to the wild storm raging around it, is entirely at home in the harsh, freezing environment. No other mammal on earth can cope with such extreme cold as the Arctic Fox. Even the Polar Bear will start to shiver before the Arctic Fox.

A little-known fact is that the Arctic Fox has two different morphs. The most common is white in winter, but there is a lesser known morph known as the Blue Fox that turns a chocolate brown in winter. Arctic Foxes are circumpolar, but the white is more dominant everywhere except Iceland.

The choice of framing for this photograph was easy as the fox's pose and tail lend it to being placed on the right-hand side of the frame. The use of negative space greatly helps to frame the fox, while the gentle shadow underneath anchors the fox to the snow-covered ground.

When taking this photograph, I deliberately tilted the camera to exaggerate and emphasise the steepness of the snow where the fox was sitting. The steeper angle helps add additional impact to the photograph.

The photograph was shot RAW and exposed to the right (ETTR) to maximise the file's signal-to-noise ratio and ensure the snow was not underexposed and grey. With winds over 20 metres per second, a very fast shutter speed was needed to freeze the flying snow.

In terms of post-production, very little has been done to the RAW file. A black point and white point were set, along with a slight white balance adjustment to neutralise the snow. Some sharpening was added to counteract the inherent softness of the camera's anti-alias filter. No additional post-production work was required.

Environmental conditions are key for storytelling in this sort of winter wildlife photograph. The flying snow provides the much-needed feeling of a winter blizzard, and the snow sticking to the coat of the fox adds the required drama to complete the story.

CANON EOS R3, CANON RF 600MM F4L IS LENS. 1/1600S @ F7.1, ISO 6400.

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OM-3

QUICK SNAPS

OM ANNOUNCES 20MP OM-3 MICRO FOUR THIRDS CAMERA

OM System (formerly Olympus) has launched the OM System OM-3, an entirely new interchangeable lens camera with some seriously nostalgic vibes.

The OM-3 is the first entirely new camera in the OM System line-up following the company's takeover of Olympus in 2021.

That said, it's not entirely a break from tradition – and is built around a TruePic X processor and a 20.37-megapixel stacked BSI Live MOS sensor, a pretty standard size for M43 cameras.

Surrounding the sensor, the body features 5-axis image stabilisation that provides up to 6.5 stops of compensation in the centre of the frame and 5.5 at the edge.

Combine this with the company's IS image-stabilised lenses, and the stabilisation jumps to 7.5 stops in the centre of the frame and 6.5 at the corners.

Autofocus should be snappy thanks to 1053-point Cross-Type On-chip points, and it offers Phase Detection AF. Additionally, there's also AI Detection AF for subjects including people, motorsports, birds, and pets.

As you might expect for an OM camera, the OM-3 features numerous in-body tools, including High-Res Shot (the company's name for pixel-shift high res mode), live ND/GND, HDR, focus stacking, and multi-exposure. Both of these are now assigned to a CP button and the control dial, a nice touch.

In addition, there's also Pro Capture Mode to capture up to 70 frames before fully pressing the shutter.

Taking a leaf out of other recent cameras we've seen lately, the OM-3 also features colour profile controls, which allow for the adjustment in saturation of 12 colours across 11 levels of saturation.

The OM-3 is built around a (quite gorgeous) magnesium alloy body that is dust and moisture resistant. OM says the camera will operate down to -10ºC.

The OM System OM-3 is available now for $3,199 AUD. You can find out more at explore.omsystem.com/om-3.

ANGELBIRD ANNOUNCES AV PRO SE CFEXPRESS TYPE B V4 MEMORY CARDS

AUSTRIAN company Angelbird has released its newest CFexpress Type B memory cards, featuring fast v4 Type B technology.

The cards, which come in capacities including 512GB, 1TB, 2TB, and 4TB, feature sustained write speeds of up to 3150 MB/s, meaning they can support 12K + RAW video. That's double the speed of the previous CFexpress v2 Type B cards.

They are also backward compatible with all camera models using the CFexpress Type B memory card format.

In addition, 'Advanced Thermal Management' helps to protect the cards from overheating along with shooting in more extreme environments, and the cards are capable of withstanding temperatures from 12°C to 72°C.

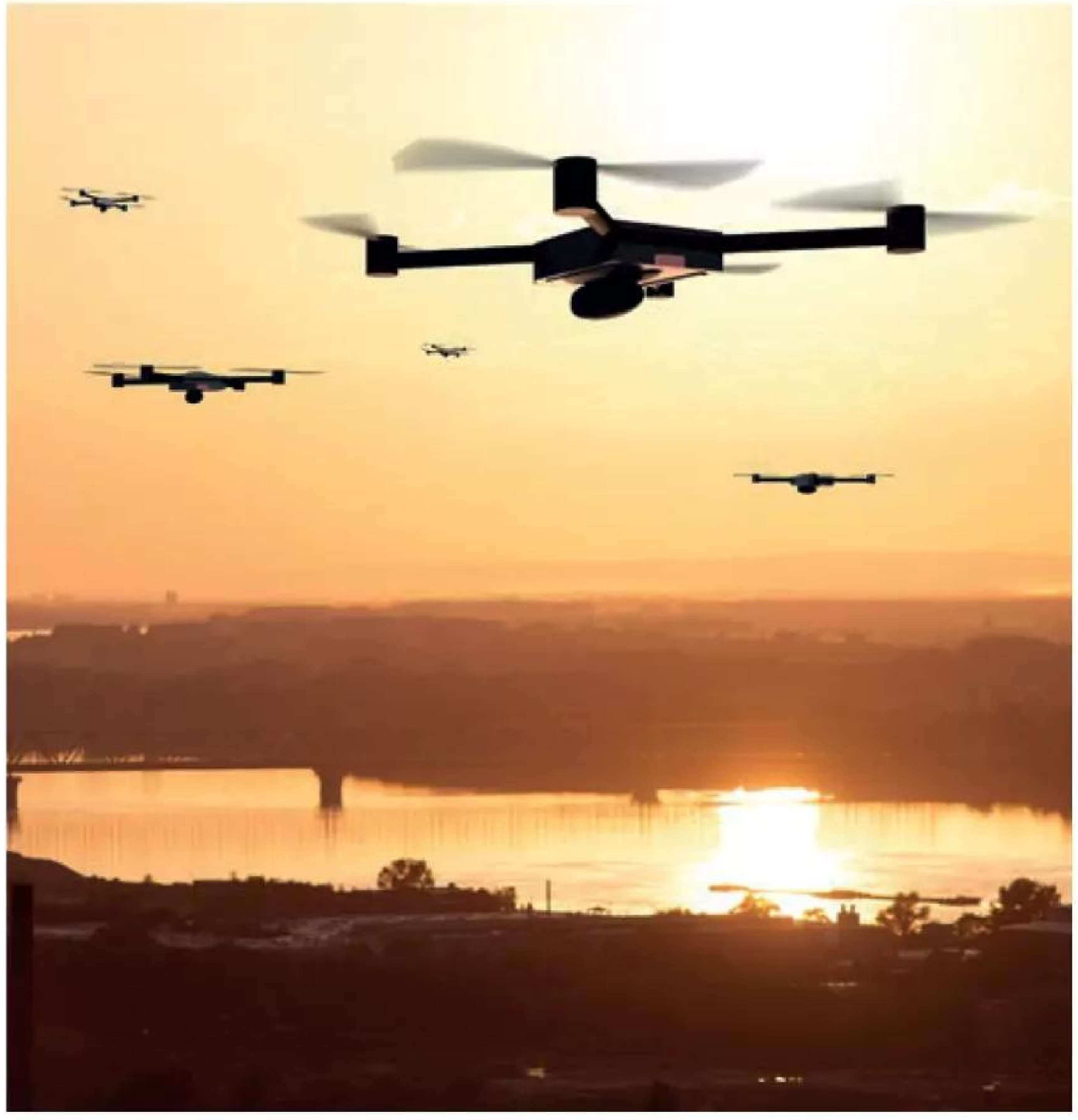
The new cards are available now, and come with a three-year warranty, and start at $495 for the 512GB card, up to $2,395 for the 4TB.

You can learn more about the new cards on Angelbird's website, angelbird.com.

DJI DITCHES NO FLY ZONES IN USA; AUSTRALIA EXEMPT, FOR NOW

DRONE manufacturer DJI says it will no longer enforce "No-Fly Zones" in the USA, putting the onus on pilots to ensure they don't fly in restricted areas, although Australia will remain exempt from the changes, for now.

In a blog post, DJI says that a new update means US-based pilots will see DJI geofencing datasets replaced by official Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) data, matching similar changes made to European Union (EU) DJI drones last year.



DJI contends that the update is in accordance with global aviation regulations and emphasises it is the responsibility of the drone operator, rather than the manufacturer, to adhere to aviation rules.

In recent years, unauthorised and irresponsible use of drones in wildfire zones have created problems for firefighting aircraft, as recently seen in a collision during the Los Angeles wildfires.

A Canadian Super Scooper aircraft assisting with the wildfire suppression was grounded after being hit by a drone.

However, DJI Australia says it has no plans to update its geofencing technology here.

Locally, DJI drone users who attempt to fly into a no-fly zone are prompted with a warning and flight is prevented.

A spokesperson for DJI Australia said that its geo-fencing system has not been changed.

"DJI will conduct further assessments based on the local situation in Australia. Please stay tuned to the official DJI announcements for the latest information," the spokesperson said.

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DJI ANNOUNCES OSMO MOBILE 7 AND 7P

DJI has announced the seventh iteration of its smartphone stabiliser, the Osmo Mobile 7.

The new smartphone gimbal is available in two versions, with both featuring a built-in retractable tripod, DJI's seventh-gen stabilisation technology, ActiveTrack 7.0, and compatibility with a new magnetic multifunctional module.

Coming some two-and-a-half years after the sixth edition, DJI looks to have spent the time creating two well-rounded devices.

Both devices feature built-in 3350 mAh batteries that provide up to 10 hours of operation and can be fully recharged via a USB-C port in around 2.5 hours.

The main difference between the two models is the 7P is slightly larger and heavier, although this is down to it packing in a few more features. This includes a built-in extension rod with a maximum length of 215mm.

In addition, the 7P gains a side wheel for focal length zoom or manual focus control.

The Osmo Mobile 7 gimbals are also now compatible with the Apple Watch, via the DJI Mimo app, and lets users use the watch as a smart remote for the gimbal.

Smart Capture allows the gimbal to detect multiple subjects, and users can direct the gimbal to lock onto one subject or switch to a different subject with a simple tap.

Sold separately with the 7 or included with the 7P, the Multifunction module is a new, magnetically-attached accessory that DJI says enhances subject tracking.

The company says it can accurately maintain focus in a crowd or reacquire a subject if they re-enter the frame after leaving briefly.

The module also features a bi-color LED light (2500-6000K). The maximum output is 40 lux (at 0.6m).

In addition, the device can be controlled using hand gestures to take photos, start or stop recording, activate tracking, or adjust a composition. Showing your palm to the module starts or stops tracking, making a "V" gesture takes a photo, and making a "Double L" gesture with two hands adjusts a subject's framing.

Finally, the Multifunction module can also be used as a microphone receiver, with the USB-C port used to connect to a phone to deliver audio while providing extra power.

DJI Osmo Mobile 7 Series is available to order from store.dji.com/au and authorised retail partners. The Osmo Mobile 7P retails for $219 AUD and the Osmo Mobile 7 retails for $159 AUD.

MOMENTO PHOTO BOOKS' ASSETS ACQUIRED BY MELBOURNE'S PHOTOBOOKSHOP.COM

ASSETS from shuttered photo book publishing company Momento Photo Books have been purchased by Melbourne photo printing company photobookshop.com.

Speaking to *AP*, Photobookshop owner Peter Thomas said the opportunity to buy the company's assets came after an attempt to buy Momento following its closure in June last year.

"We wanted to buy the business once we heard it had closed, but unfortunately we weren't able to come to a deal," he said.

"Later, through the liquidators, we were able to acquire some of the company's physical assets, including a 7-colour HP Indigo digital press, along with a laminator, UV coater, lay-flat book-binding machine, sewing machine, and other book finishing equipment."

Like Momento, Photobookshop is an Australian-owned and operated business. It employs 50 people from its base in Melbourne and also has a presence in New Zealand. The company was founded in 2009.

The company's services include photobooks, canvases and other photoprint products, and, like Momento, it uses a web-based design tool for laying out photobooks and designs.

Momento's shock closure in 2024 prompted an outpouring of sadness from both sides of the Tasman. The business was a popular platform for many Australasian photographers to publish their work.

At the time, company founder Libby Jeffery said the business closure was a casualty that began during Covid.

"The biggest issue was two years of Covid compounded by another two years of the cost of living crisis, that left customers with minimal funds for discretionary spending," she told *AP*.

Photobookshop's Peter Thomas says the challenges Momento faced weren't unique, and describes rising costs, including wages, ink and paper and postage as all seeing large increases in recent years.

"When we started, it was possible to freight a photobook for $5, now it's $12," he said.

Despite this, he is confident that Momento users will enjoy the Photobookshop experience.

"We'd really love to help photographers print their work, and our staff can help with the learning curve of using our software," he says.

LEICA BRINGING STEVE MCCURRY TO AUSTRALIA IN AUGUST

AS part of Leica's year-long centenary celebrations marking 100 years since the launch of the Leica I – the world's first mass-produced 35mm camera – the German company has announced plans for a series of photographic exhibitions to be presented throughout the world with each country pairing an established photographer with a new talent.

For Australia, the exhibition will feature world-renowned documentary photographer Steve McCurry in association with newcomer Jessie Brinkman Evans.

Jessie Brinkman Evans has roots in Australia and Southern California, and has travelled extensively to Greenland in her young career – capturing the uniqueness of life in the Arctic and exploring the interplay of land and culture.

The exhibition, which will play a leading role in a year of centenary celebrations, is scheduled from August 2025 at the Leica Galleries in Sydney and Melbourne.

Further details of the exhibition will be announced in mid-2025.

BEST IN SHOW 2025

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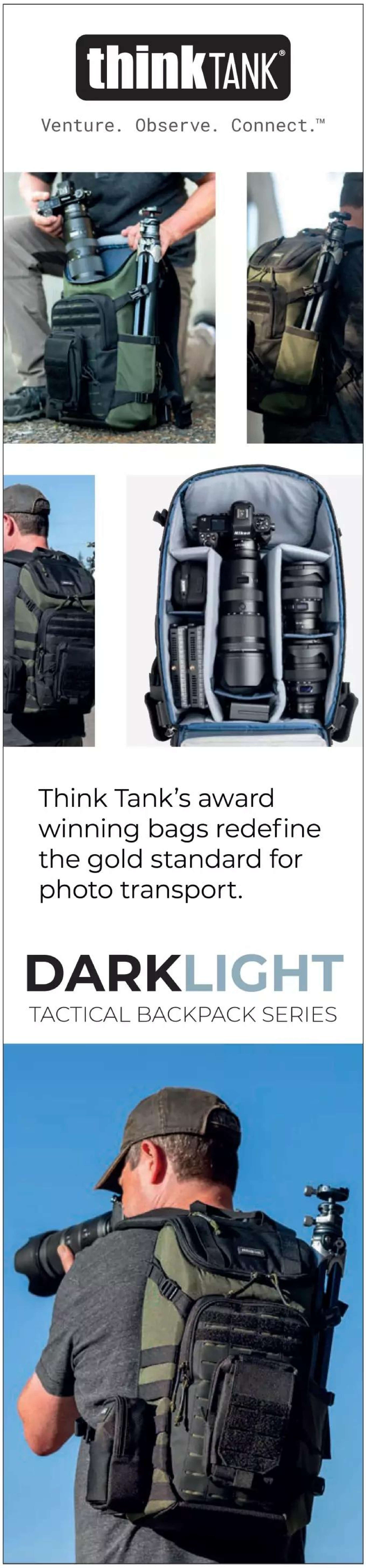

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GETTY IMAGES AND SHUTTERSTOCK ANNOUNCE MERGER IN $3.7B DEAL

GETTY Images Holdings, Inc. and Shutterstock, already the two largest licensed visual content companies in the world, have announced plans to merge, creating a 'premier visual content company'.

The combined company, which would have a value of approximately $3.7 billion USD ($5.93b AUD) will be named Getty Images Holdings, Inc., according to the companies.

In a press release, Getty Images and Shutterstock say the merger will allow it to offer a content library with greater depth and breadth for the benefit of customers, along with expanded opportunities for its contributor community and a reinforced commitment to the adoption of inclusive and representative content.

Furthermore, the stronger financial profile of the combined company is expected to create increased capacity for product investment and innovation.

On the back of the announcement, Shutterstock's shares jumped 26.5% in premarket trading, while Getty Images was up 50.2%. Stocks of both the companies have been in decline for a number of years.

"Today's announcement is exciting and transformational for our companies, unlocking multiple opportunities to strengthen our financial foundation and invest in the future—including enhancing our content offerings, expanding event coverage, and delivering new technologies to better serve our customers," said Craig Peters, CEO, Getty Images.

"By combining our complementary strengths, we can better address customer opportunities while delivering exceptional value to our partners, contributors, and stockholders," he said.

Peters will serve as the CEO of the combined company. Getty Images investors will own about 54.7% of the new company with Shutterstock stockholders owning the remainder.

According to the companies, the deal is expected to generate between $150 million and $200 million in annual cost savings by its third year.

In an email to Getty contributors seen by *Australian Photography*, Peters sought to reassure its contributor community.

"We are undertaking this merger in large part because we expect it to provide expanded reach for your content, support for new asset types and formats and enhanced support and tools to manage your work.

"We believe in the opportunity of AI, but [also] the need to compensate creators for the use of their work. These beliefs will not change with the transaction," he said.

Once the merger is complete, the new company will continue to trade on the New York Stock Exchange under the ticker symbol "GETY". ✪

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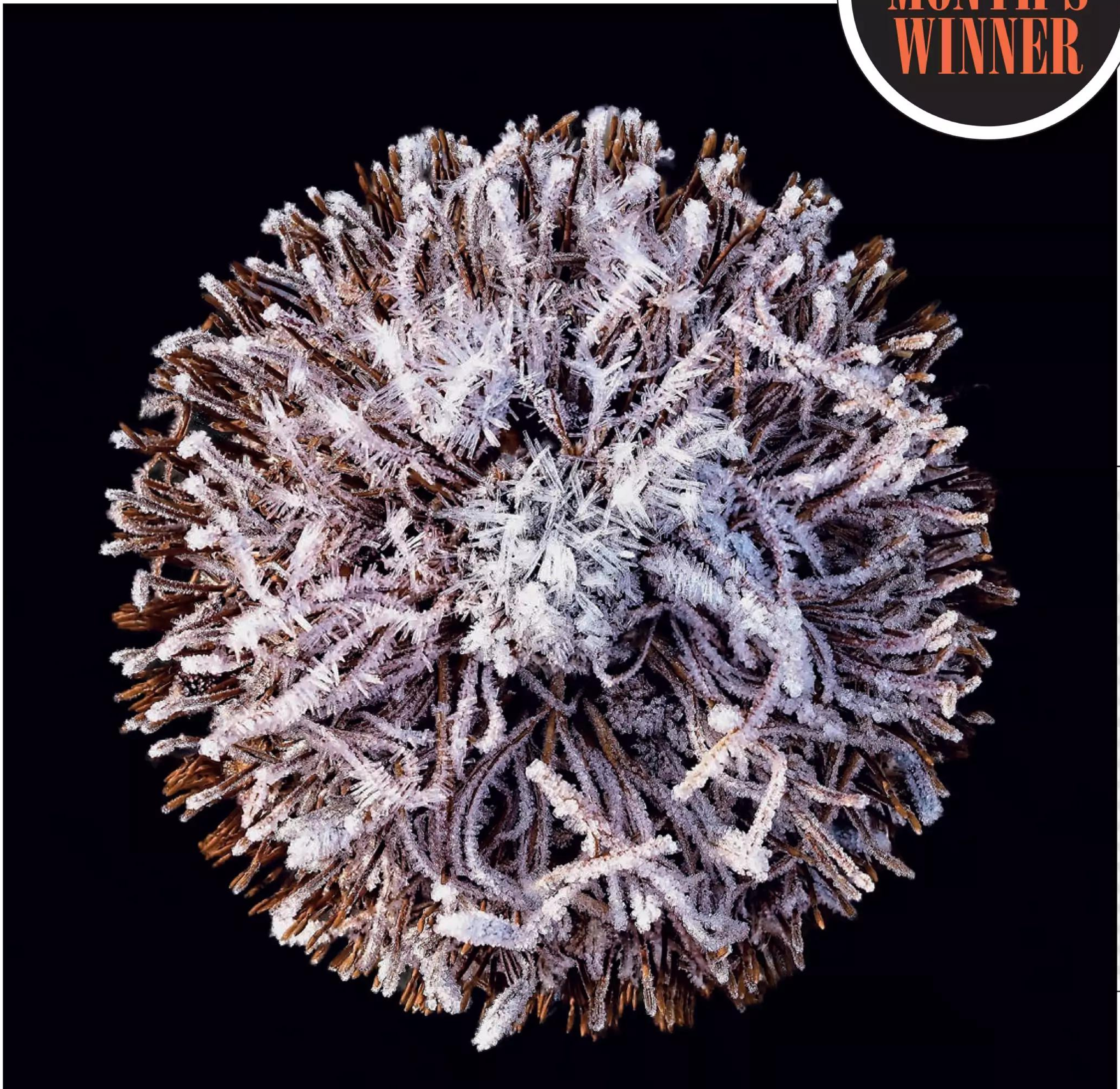
YOUR BEST SHOT

WINTER

As we start to come into the coldest part of the year, it also happens to be our favourite period for photography! There's something about winter that makes for captivating and moody imagery, and based on the fantastic entries we received this month, it appears you agree with us. Here were our picks.

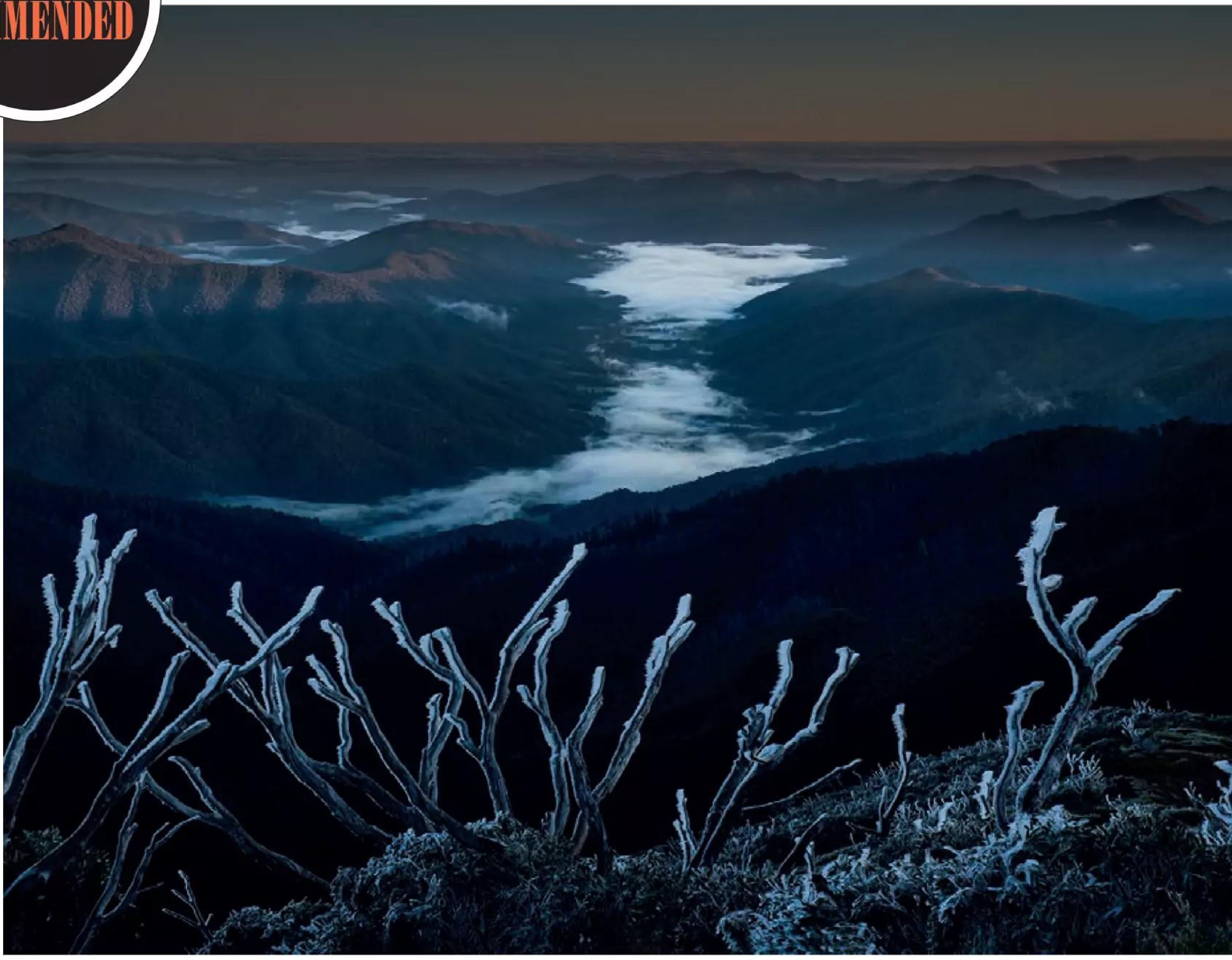
THIS MONTH'S WINNER



HIGHLY COMMENDED

IAN SEMMENS

Ovens Valley from Mt Feathertop



EDITOR'S COMMENT
Ian Semmens tells us he had hiked up to the top of Mt Feathertop in Victoria and was camped in the snow for several days when he captured this moody landscape.

"There were a lot of trees and grasses covered in wind-driven snow which turned into ice," he explains. "I took this shot during early dawn to get the warmth in the rising sun striking the ranges contrasted with the blue of the icy branches and fog in the valley."

This is a landscape where it all comes together – a great, impressive view, and weather that amplifies the scene beyond the ordinary. Your use of the frozen grasses in the foreground and that lovely low fog in the background make for a captivating and well-constructed frame.

TECHNICAL DETAILS
Three shot stitch. Panasonic G9, Panasonic 12-60mm f3.5-5.6 lens @ 54mm. 1/80s @ f8, ISO 200.

SIMONE SLATER

A very cold morning! (Banksia menziesii)

EDITOR'S COMMENT
Simone Slater tells us she took this image during the Canberra winter, where there had already been several really frosty mornings. "Finally, when the temperature was -7ºC, I managed to get out of bed and head to the Australian National Botanic Gardens," she says.

"This is my favourite shot of the morning – a banksia flower covered in a heavy frost."

What we loved about this image was the clean crispness and beautifully ordered subject matter, along with a lovely soft tone. You've done a great job with editing this image to make it appear as if it was captured with studio lighting, and the banksia has lots of wonderful details to explore. In fact it's these details that are the real hero of the image, giving the viewer lots to study.

TECHNICAL DETAILS
OM system E-M3 Mark III, OM 30mm F3.5 Macro lens. Eight image stack. 1/200s @ f5, ISO 320.

Thanks to the team at Blonde Robot, Simone Slater has won a Think Tank DarkLight Backpack in 20L size. Also available in 14L, the DarkLight is the ideal blend of tactical style and everyday functionality. Whether you're an enthusiast capturing cityscapes or an advanced amateur exploring the great outdoors, it offers a durable and comfortable solution to carry your gear. Built with a laser-cut MOLLE panel and tactical webbing rails, this rucksack allows you to precisely configure your loadout.

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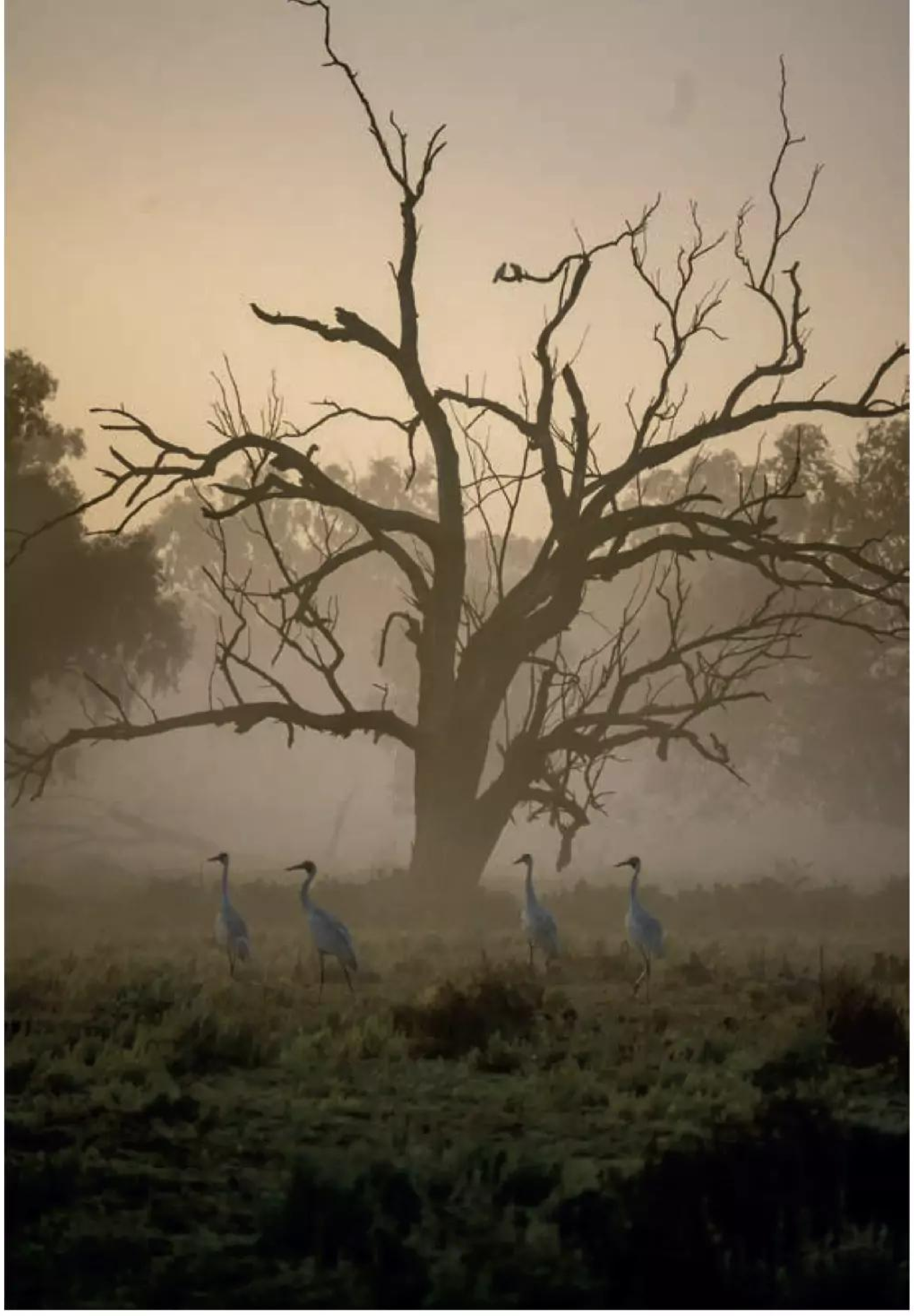
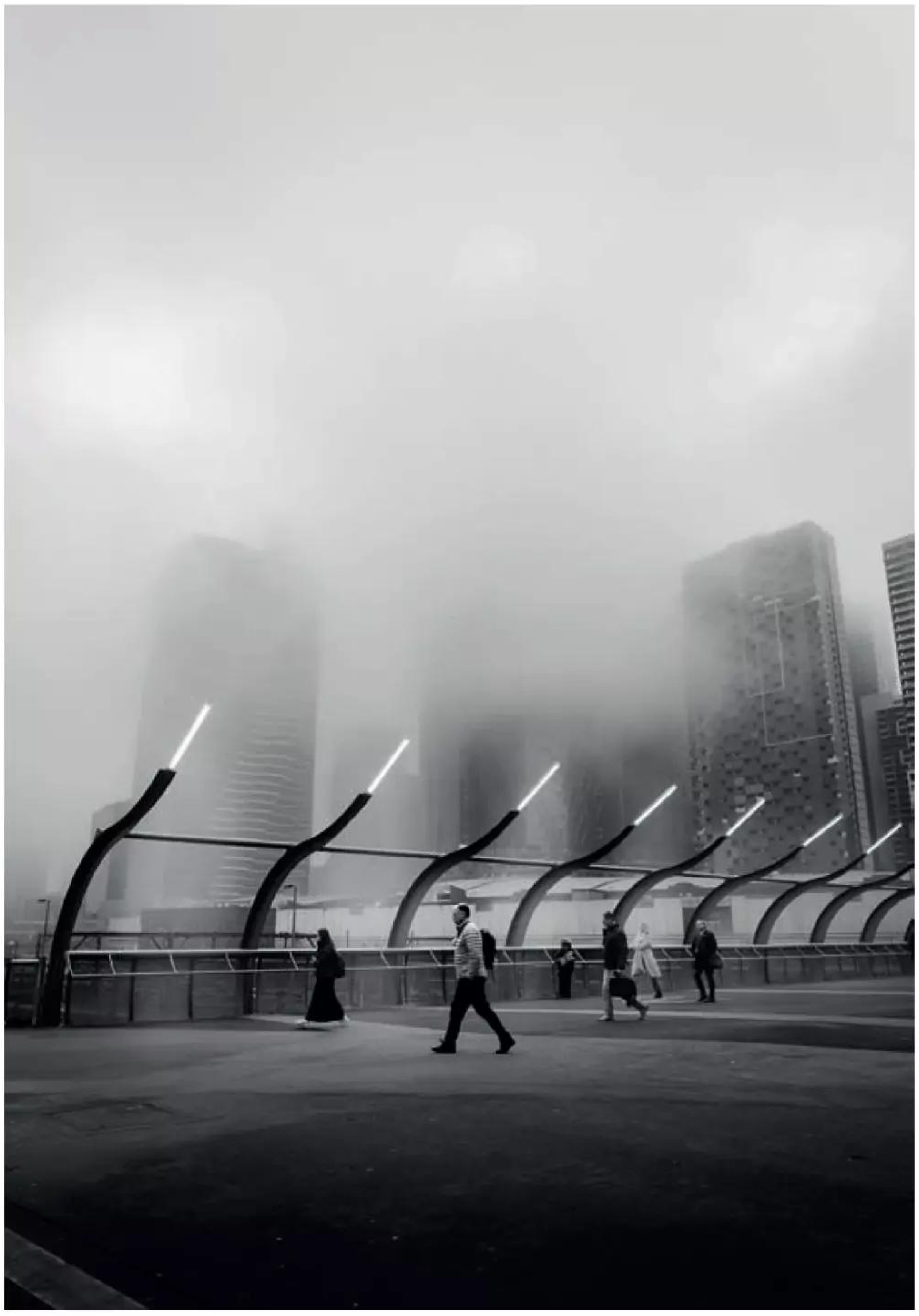
ROWIE HAWLEY

Brolgas in the mist

HOW I DID IT
This was captured on an early winter's morning in the Macquarie Marshes. I was heading into town, and in the right place at the right time as a group of brolgas were chilling out in the paddock. Normally I just admire and drive on by, but something told me to pull over and take the shot, I'm so glad I did!

TECHNICAL DETAILS
Nikon Z50, NIKKOR Z DX 50-250mm f/4.5-6.3 VR lens @ 250mm. 1/800s @ f6.3, ISO 400.





PAIGE BONNICI

A foggy morning In Melbourne

HOW I DID IT
This photo was taken on my daily commute to work. I walked out the front of my house to thick fog and I knew I had to go back inside and take my camera on the trip. As I walked out of Southern Cross, I stood around waiting for the right moment.

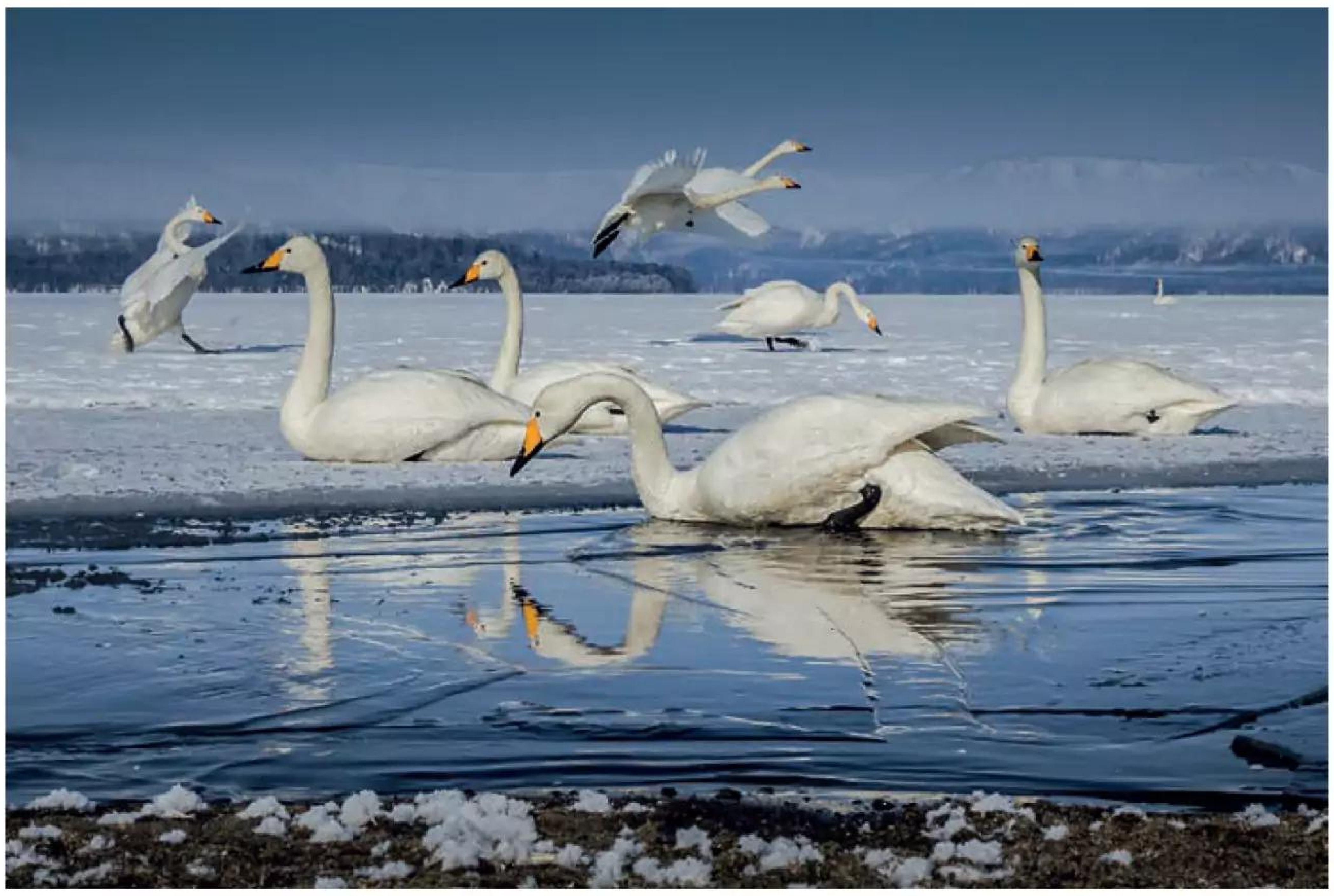
TECHNICAL DETAILS
Sony A7C II, 24-105mm f4 lens @ 24mm. 1/80s @ f6.3, ISO 400.

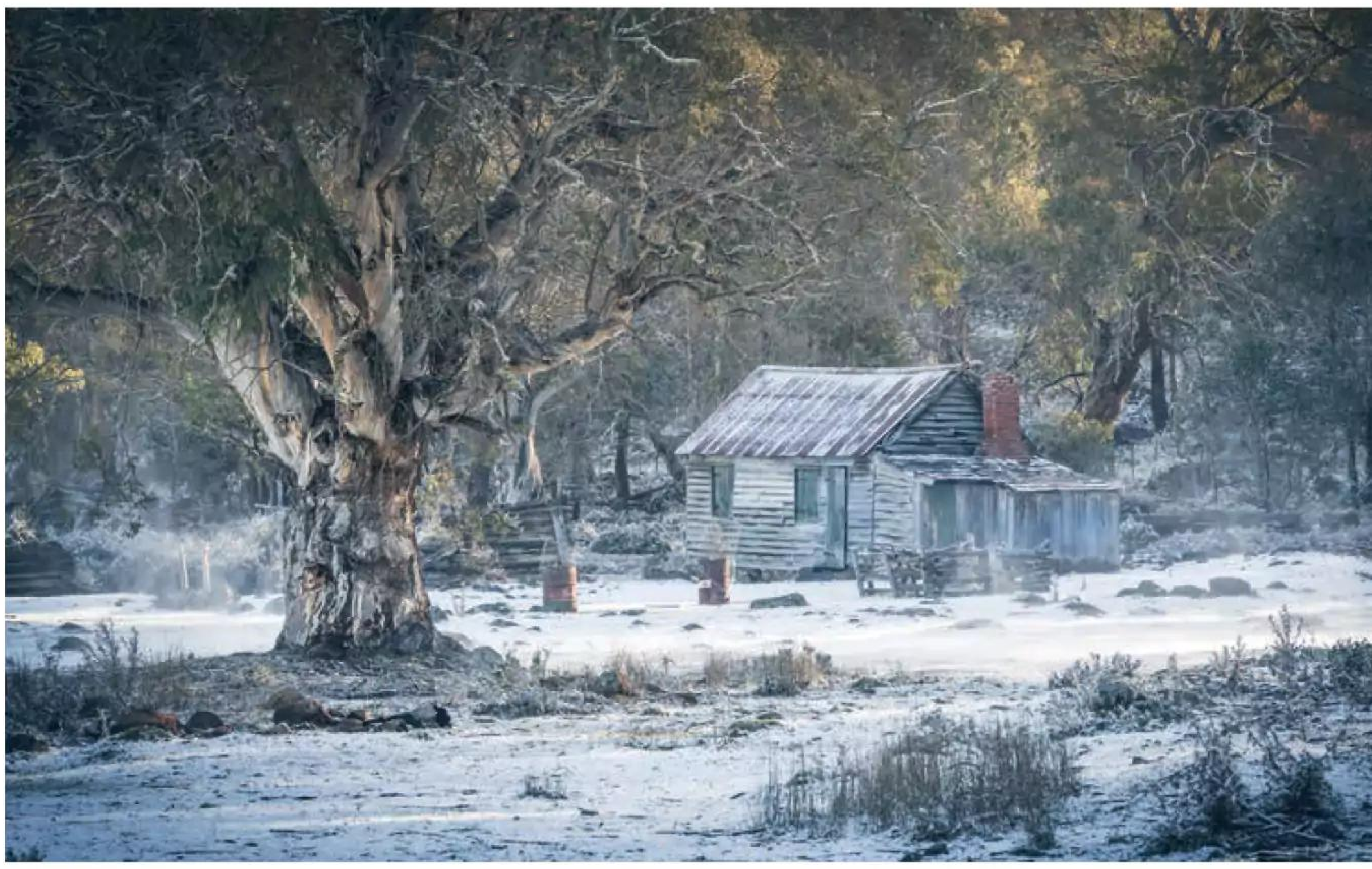
LINDA OLIVER

Whooper swans

HOW I DID IT
With Lake Kussharo, Northern Japan, nearly fully frozen over, and my exhaling breath creating frost on my eyelashes and ice on the back of my camera, these beautiful Whooper Swans were unconcerned about the subzero temperature.

TECHNICAL DETAILS
Canon 6D, Canon EF 24-105mm L lens @ 33mm. 1/1600s @ f9, ISO 250.





JOY KACHINA

As Time Goes By

HOW I DID IT
While making our way up to the Central Plateau in the Highlands of Tasmania during the winter months, we stumbled upon an intriguing abandoned old home, its weathered walls standing resilient among the towering gum trees. The entire scene was transformed by a delicate blanket of fresh snow that gently covered the ground and clung to the branches, creating a beautiful scene.

TECHNICAL DETAILS
Nikon Z8, 24-120 Nikkor Lens @ 120mm. 1/60s @ f8, ISO 400.

AV PRO CFexpress A
1TB
1800MB/s
400
AV PRO CFexpress A

CFexpress™ 4.0 Type A 256GB 512GB 1TB

ENGINEERED FOR SONY CAMERAS

The AV PRO CFexpress A is the ultimate card for professionals. This future-proof card provides fast file offloading, perfect for Sony users capturing high-data-rate video, stills, and 8K RAW bursts.

ANGELBIRD

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UPCOMING COMPETITION THEMES

AUGUST 2025
WILDLIFE
31 May 2025

OCTOBER 2025
TRAVEL
31 July 2025

DECEMBER 2025
LIQUID
30 September 2025

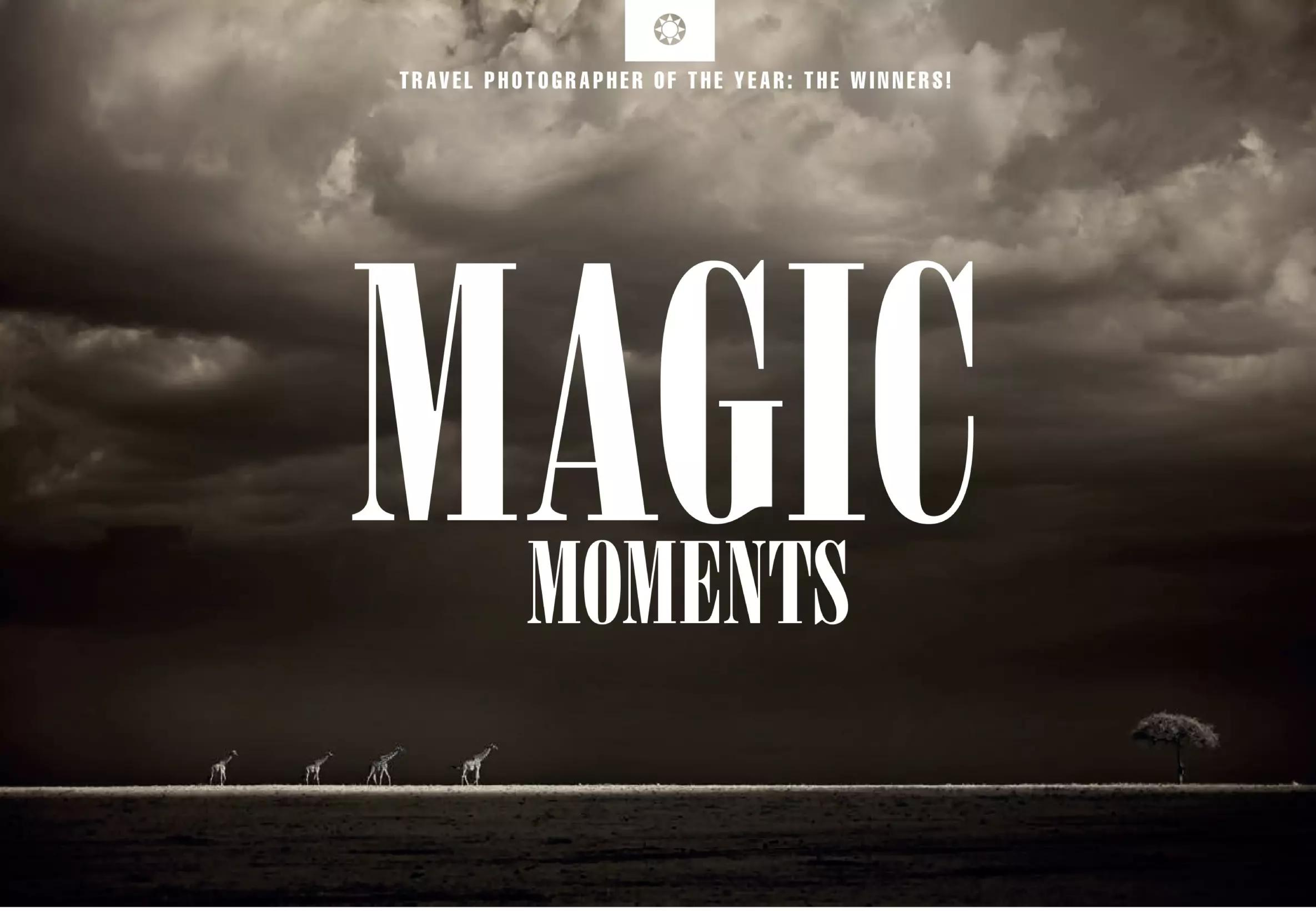
ANNUAL 2026
THE BEACH
31 October 2025

FEBRUARY 2026
FOOD
6 December 2025

YOUR ENTRY

1. Email your entry to yourbestshot@australianphotography.com with the name of the competition theme in the email subject line, for example: Weather, Abstract, Landscape, etc.
2. The image file must be the same as your name, for example Jane Smith.jpg. If you enter multiple images, each new image file name should be appended with a unique number, eg Jane Smith2.jpg
3. A maximum of three images can be entered per person.
4. Images must be in JPEG format.
5. Email file size must not exceed 7MB.
6. Please include the following information about your entry in the body of your email: Name, image title and up to 200 words explaining how you created your image. Please also include technical details including camera, lens, focal length, shutter speed, aperture, ISO, tripod (if used) and a brief summary of any software edits.

Harlowe
Create anywhere, no matter the weather
Harlowe
Avant Max-X



MAGIC MOMENTS

BY THE AP TEAM

Images from around the world have shared the spoils in the annual Travel Photographer of the Year competition.

US photographer Piper Mackay has been awarded the title of Travel Photographer of the Year 2024, for a series of "beautiful and exquisite" portraits of African women and "atmospheric" giraffes in Kenya's Maasai Mara, captured with an infrared (IR) camera.

TPOTY founder Chris Coe said: "So many images seen today are over-saturated, over-processed and even AI-generated. A 'less is more' approach is often far more effective.

"It is therefore refreshing to judge images which demonstrate good camera craft and in-camera creativity – shot full-frame, or close to it, and with very little retouching.

"They are beautifully composed, celebrating both indigenous women and wildlife on the African savanna.

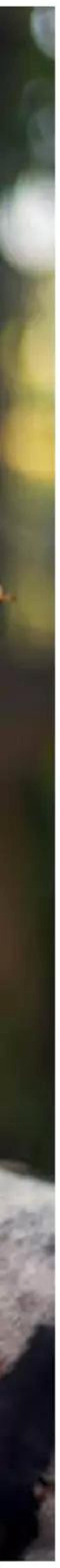
"The use of black and white, with a camera converted to shoot infrared (IR), allows us to absorb the details and atmosphere which good monochrome conveys so well.

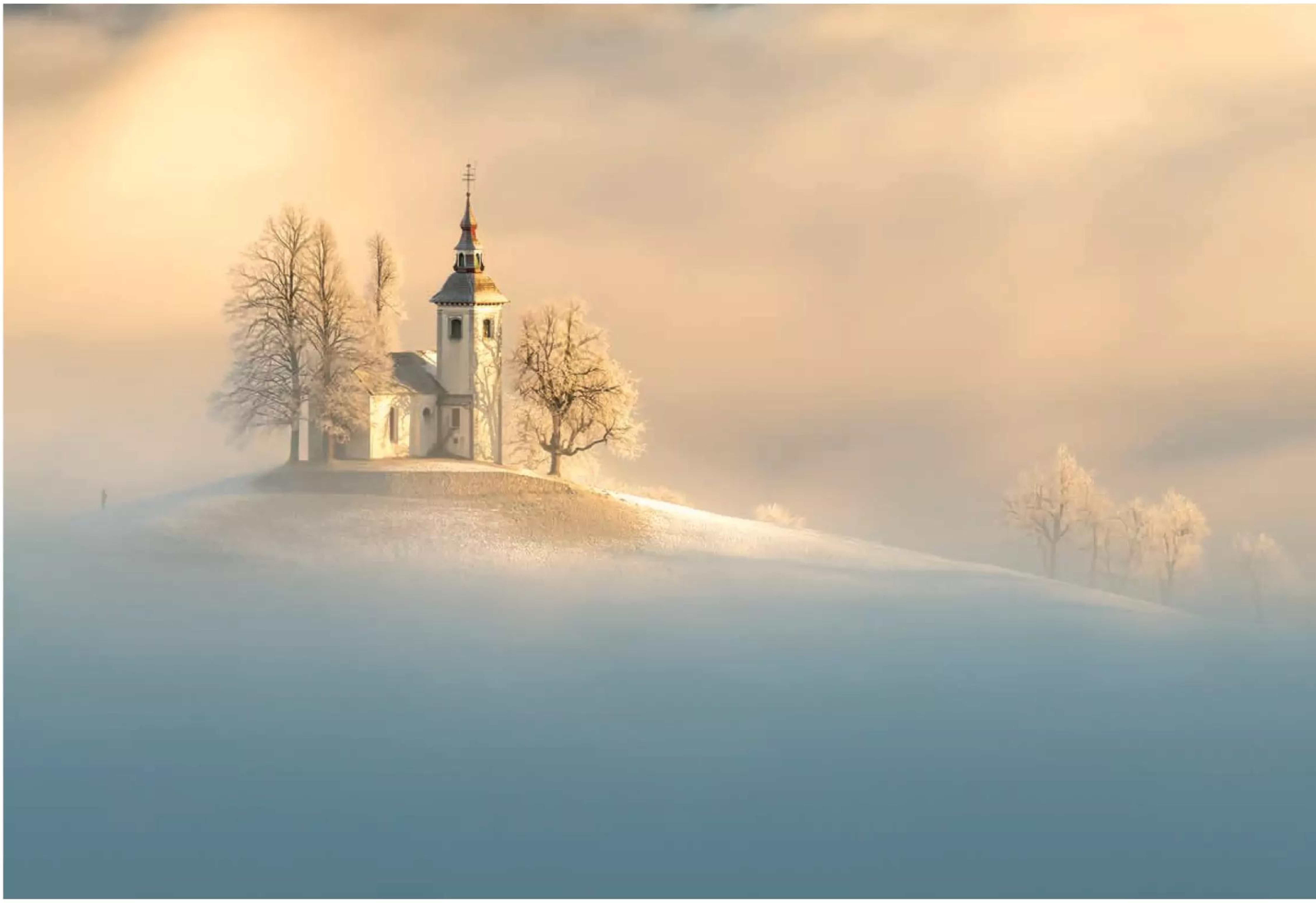
"Her images have an immediate impact, but the intricate detail and atmosphere captured is also eye-catching and highly engaging."

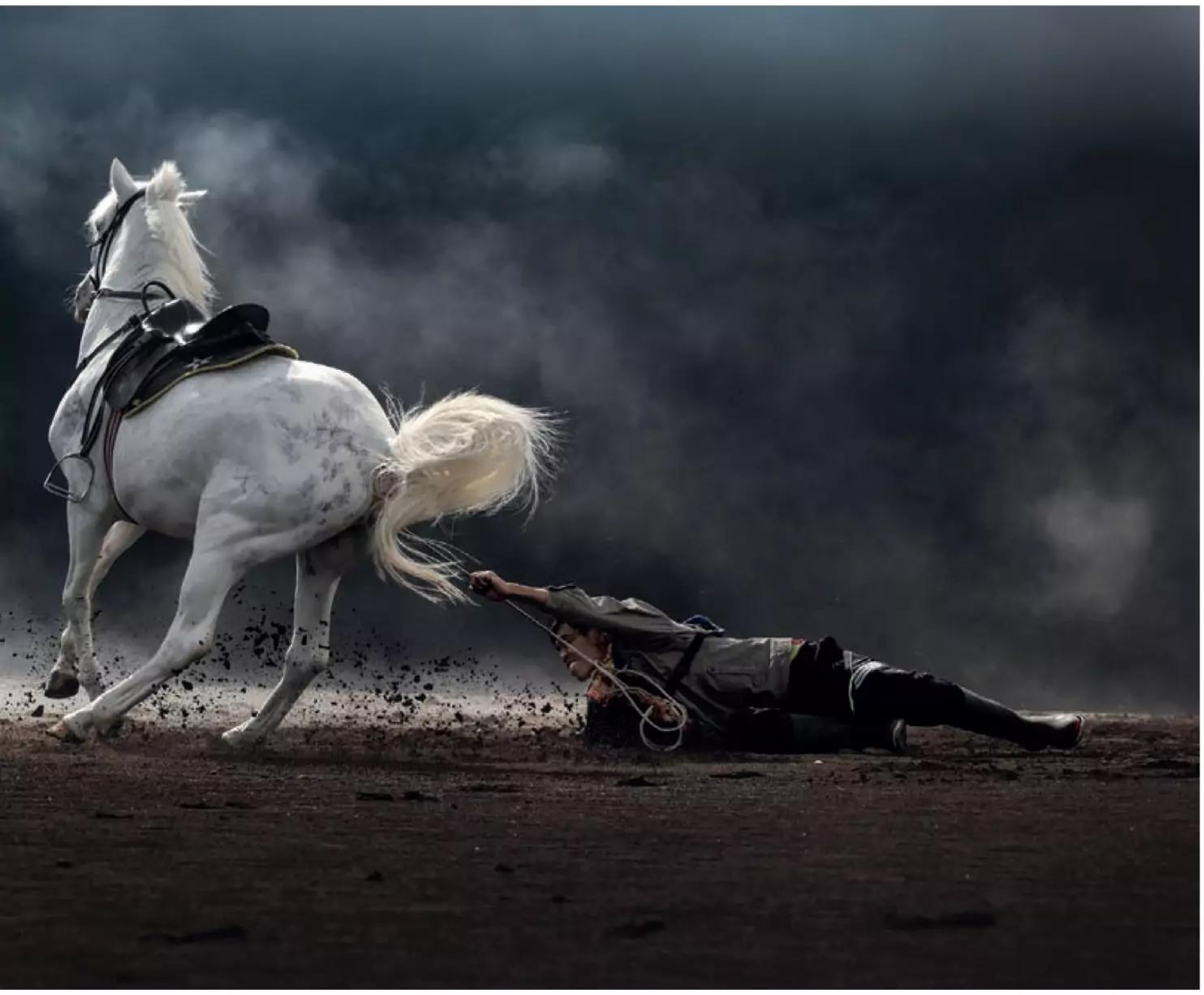
In addition to the major award, a number of Australian photographers were recognised, including 12-year-old Leonardo Murray, who won the Young TPOTY 14 years & Under category for his series of images of dunes in the Namib Desert, along with Joshua Holko, who is featured in this issue's Behind the Lens. ✪

You can see many more of the amazing images that won categories and were shortlisted at australianphotography.com.

Giraffes march across Kenya's Maasai Mara in this winning image by Piper Mackay. Nikon Z7, Nikkor Z 24-70mm f/4 S lens @ 70mm. 1/3200s @ f4, ISO 250.







CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:
Winner of the Escape category, Hong Kong-based photographer Ngar Shun Victor Wong. Canon R5, EF100-400mm f/4.5-5.6L IS USM lens @ 340mm. 5s @ f11, ISO 50;

Best Single Image in a Portfolio – Faces, People, Cultures category winner, Partha Pratim Roy, India. Canon R5, EF28-300mm f/3.5-5.6L IS USM lens @ 170mm. 1/2000s @ f5.6, ISO 200;

Travel in Monochrome category winner, Aleš Krivec, Slovenia. His winning series was captured in the Dolomites. Nikon D800, 28-300mm f/3.5-5.6 lens @ 62mm. 1/800s @ f11, ISO 100;

Belgian photographer Alain Schroeder won the Best Single Image in the Planet Earth – Landscapes, Climate & Water category. In Indonesia, Mutiari, 4 years old, plays with a friend in the flooded streets of Jeruksari. The sea level in Indonesia has risen by an alarming 4mm annually since 1992. Poorly planned urbanisation and infrastructure development also contribute to flooding in these low-lying areas. Fujifilm X-T4, 10-24mm f/4 lens @ 10mm. 1/400s @ f4, ISO 400;

A portrait from Piper Mackay's winning series. Nikon Z7, Nikkor Z 24-70mm f/4 S lens @ 38mm. 1/500s @ f4.5, ISO 125;

US photographer Kevin Hoare's image was captured in Mindima, Papua New Guinea. His series was selected as a finalist in the Rising Talent Award. Canon 80D, EF50mm f/1.8 STM lens. 1/320s @ f1.8, ISO 320.

What a beautiful bird this Azure-shouldered Tanager is! The light was difficult as it was very early, and I had the worst angle with a stick in the background, which I was able to remove with the Object Aware removal tool in LrC. That done, I used a Subject Target Mask to brighten the detail of the bird (plus 1 stop and shadow adjustments) plus overall vibrance, detail and sharpening, before applying noise reduction. In the past I would have considered using a flash to highlight the bird, but this would leave the background less colourful and leave me with less frames per second capture rate as the flash could not keep up recycling. Sony A1, FE 100-400mm F4.5-5.6 GM OSS lens @ 400mm. 1/2000s @ f6.3, ISO 5000.

LOW LIGHT AND HIGH ISO

BY DARRAN LEAL

Fast moving subjects and low light must be up with the toughest challenges for photography, and yet a combination of old tricks and new tech are changing that. *AP* looks at a few tips to maximise your results.

I've just arrived back from Brazil and wow, it's as good as Africa for wildlife!

Photographing birds like tanagers and hummingbirds have always pushed my skills, equipment and tools, but it's not until you combine these subjects with low light shoots and fast shutter speeds, that they become a real challenge.

And yet on this trip I was really reminded of how new camera technologies have advanced in the few years since I was last here. Our sensors are exponentially better than they were a few short years ago, and denoising technology makes what were previously unthinkable ISOs possible.

Here are five key points to consider or help you when low light shooting.

1 A NEW CAMERA HELPS, BUT THERE ARE OTHER OPTIONS

I use the Sony A1 and depending on the subject, the contrast and shooting conditions, I have shot images at ISO 4000 with great results. But at the same time, this is an $8,000+ camera body out of reach of many photographers.

However, one of the great technological advancements of the last five years has been Denoise tools like Topaz Photo AI and Denoise in Adobe Lightroom.

Images captured on smaller sensor cameras like Micro Four Thirds models by Olympus and Panasonic and many APS-C sensors can really benefit from this technology, as these smaller sensors are more susceptible to noise.

2 CHOOSE YOUR LENS WISELY

If you find yourself regularly shooting in low light you might want to consider more specialised 'fast lenses'. For example, if you love portrait photography, then an 85mm f1.4 or f1.8 lens will make a huge difference to your results compared to a kit lens, as its design means it 'gathers' more light.

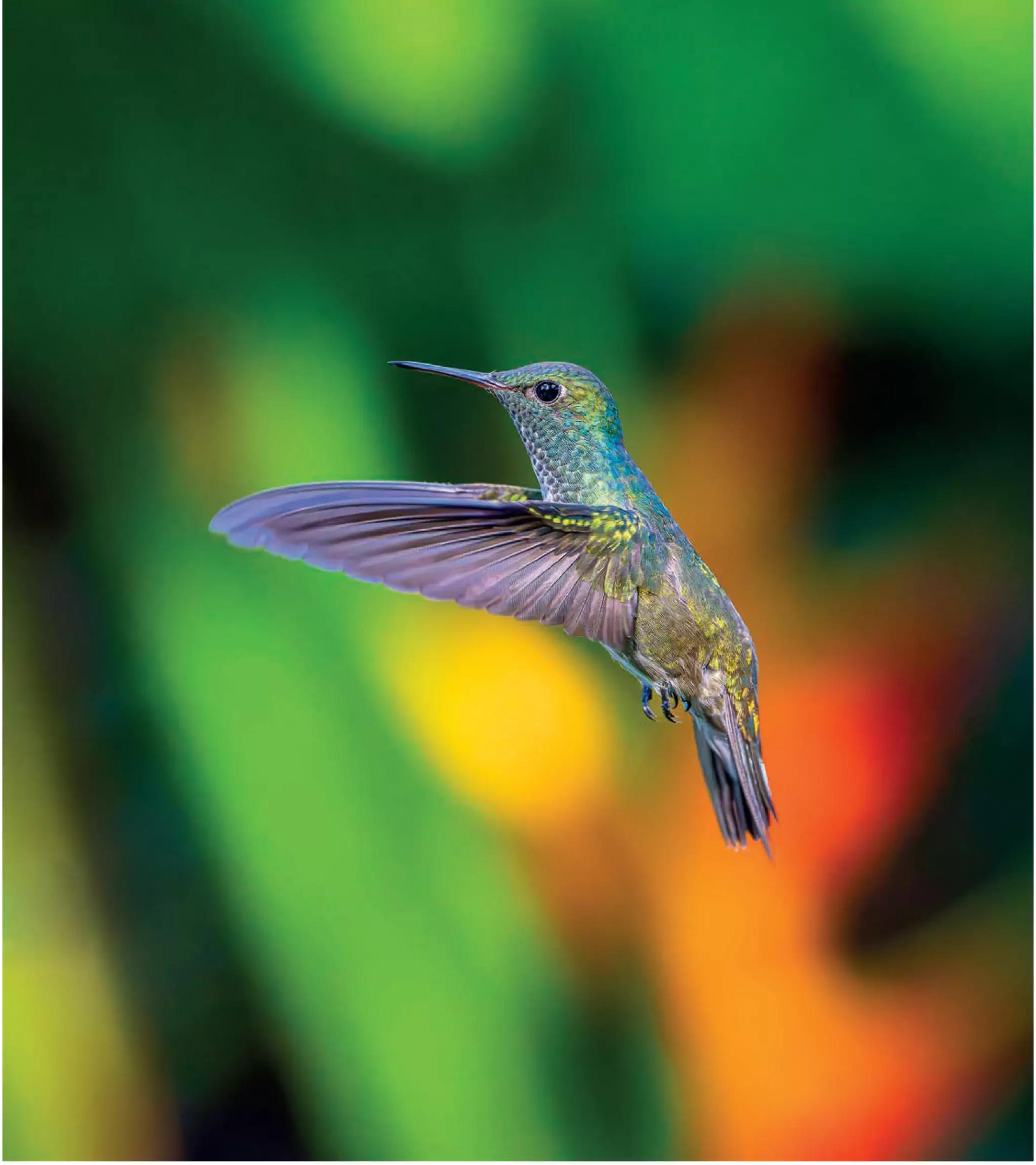
A prime lens like this (one with a fixed focal length) is lighter than a zoom lens and often has a wider maximum aperture.

Let's say you tried to shoot a subject with a 24-105mm f4 zoom lens and the available light offered 1/30s @ f4, ISO 10000. With an 85mm f1.4 lens, you could use the combination of 1/60s @ f1.4, ISO 5000 – a big difference in the amount of noise, and you get a faster shutter speed too.

TOP: I was in Japan in the middle of winter in minus 20 degrees celsius to photograph these Steller's Sea Eagles. Perfect blue sky days can never be guaranteed, so we went with the conditions – using Manual Mode, 1/2000/s @ f8 and Auto ISO. The fast shutter speed offered the best chance to freeze movement. I close down my aperture sometimes by one stop from open, to offer a little more depth of field. I no longer care about the ISO going too high. What is too high? You should test this on your camera as results vary from camera to camera. Sony A1 II, FE 100-400mm F4.5-5.6 GM OSS lens @ 244mm. 1/2000s @ f8, ISO 1000.

MIDDLE: Hummingbirds are too cute! However, they can be tough to find and tough to photograph. Our local expert travel operators help us with the best location. It's then up to me to help the group get the best angle and the best settings. Sony A1, FE 100-400mm F4.5-5.6 GM OSS lens @ 400mm. 1/1000s @ f5.6, ISO 6400.

This jaguar was captured in Brazil's Pantanal. My personal preference was for a darker moodier image, so I created a Virtual Copy in LrC, which lets me work on a new file. Then, I underexposed the overall image by two stops and used a Radial Gradient tool to brighten the jaguar. Sony A1, FE 100-400mm F4.5-5.6 GM OSS + 1.4X Teleconverter @ 560mm. 1/640s @ f9, ISO 8000.



TOP: Yes, this image was captured at ISO 32,000! I used LrC Denoise to take out unwanted grain and give a better perceived sharpness. An image like this would have been simply unusable a few short years ago. Sony A1, FE 200-600mm F5.6-6.3 G OSS lens @ 600mm. 1/1600s @ f8, ISO 32000.

RIGHT, TOP: A White-tailed Eagle clutching a pilchard. I was shooting 15 frames per second. Fast shutter speed was important to freeze the action and f8 optimised depth of field and in theory, is the sharpest aperture for the lens used. Finally, I used Denoise in LrC. Sony A1 II, FE 100-400mm F4.5-5.6 GM OSS lens @ 345mm. 1/2000s @ f8, ISO 2500.

RIGHT, BOTTOM: I love to go back through my library and reprocess, knowing that new tools are going to offer an even better result. The original file was very noisy, but Denoise has made it a more usable image that would print up large and beautiful. Canon EOS 5DS, EF100-400mm f/4.5-5.6L IS II USM lens @ 148mm. 1/6s @ f32, ISO 3200.

COMPARING DENOISE OPTIONS

Adobe Lightroom Classic (LrC) is my go-to software for denoising images. I have extensively field tested it and the results are outstanding. It's also my preferred option as it is already in the editing panel of Lightroom, speeding up my workflow.

However, I occasionally use Topaz's Photo AI as a plug-in to LrC. It can be used as stand alone software also, however it is a bit slower and power hungry. Perhaps its greatest feature however is its ability to sharpen images, especially those that are not quite to your high standards. I like to use it for instances where I need to upsize and Denoise an image file at the same time.

Finally, I have also applied the Topaz Photo AI sharpening after Denoising in LrC. I'm still trialling some of these combinations!

3 STABILITY IS KEY

We are so lucky today to have amazing stabilisation built into most of our camera systems.

And while I love this technology, my first point of stabilisation has always been how I hold my camera. That means I stand with a wide stance, keep my elbows close to my side and use two hands where possible – one on the body and one on the lens. If possible, I'll also lean against something for extra support too.

In some instances, I'll also place my camera on a sturdy surface or tripod and use a remote control or the self-timer on the camera to minimise camera shake, but for moving subjects this is often not possible.

However, with a strong, stable stance and with in-camera stabilisation, I am comfortable hand holding up to one second on occasions and even slower depending on the lens and subject.

And now that I'm increasingly less concerned about increasing my ISO, the shutter speed is also going to go faster – perfect if sharp results are required.

4 CONSIDER ADDING LIGHT

Another option is to add your own artificial light. This can be via a flash unit, which delivers a short powerful light burst, or via a continuous light source such as a small LED panel.

I have a small flash unit that I occasionally use, and often at a higher ISO than in years past. Used either with diffusion or off to the side, a light like this can add more light to the scene and may be enough to allow you to push a faster shutter speed.

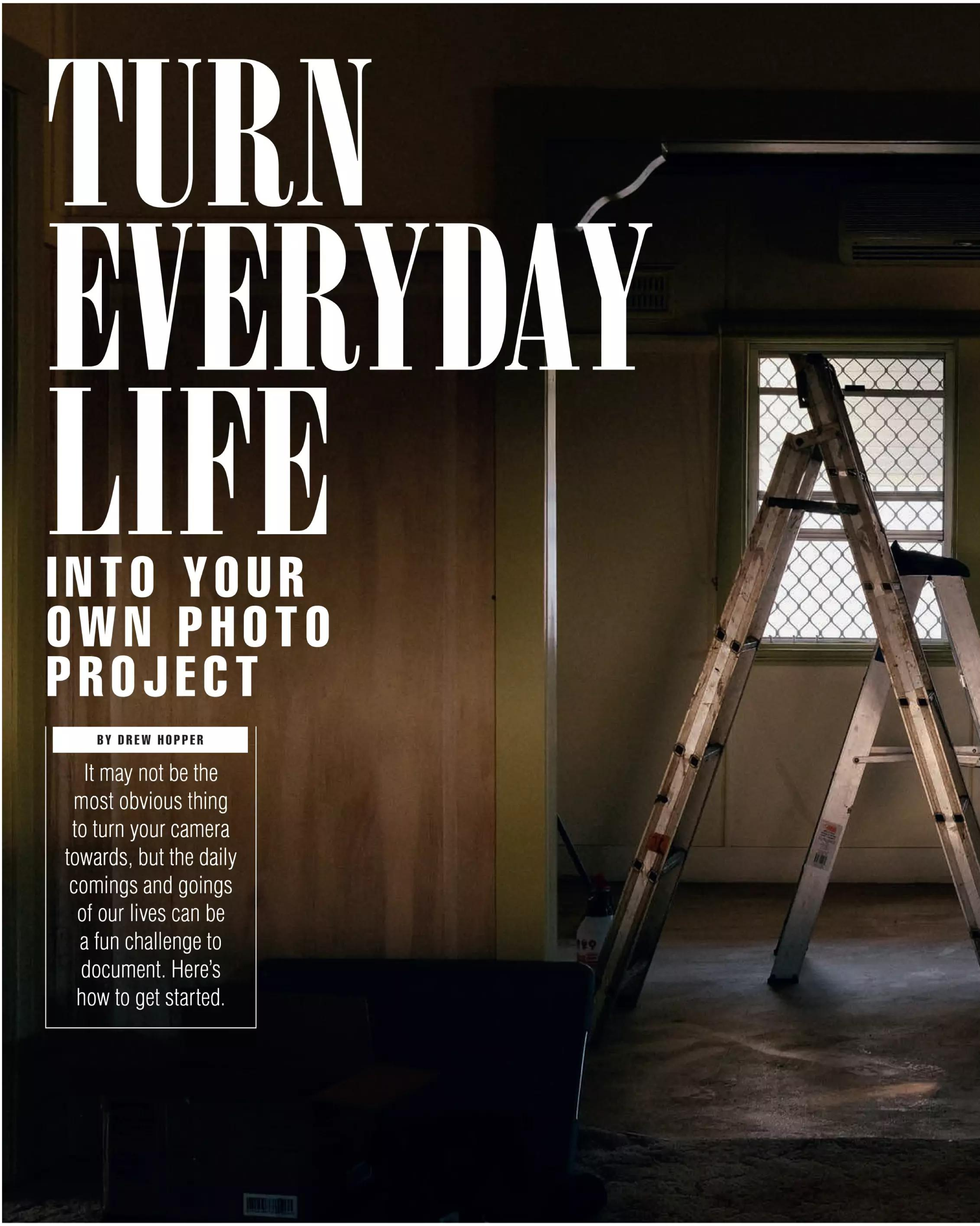
5 LEARN TO EMBRACE IT

A sharp photo that's noisy is always better than a blurry photo with no noise. My advice is to always prioritise a sharp image above all else.

Remember too, that in some cases image noise is not all bad. Black and white images in particular look great with some noise and grain. In fact, my son Pearce will occasionally use Denoise software and then add noise back into the final result. Why? Because the Raw camera noise can be clunky and unnatural looking. Adding noise via software like Photoshop can offer a more pleasing grain to the viewer and give a different result.

It was only two years ago that I was suggesting to photographers to keep their ISO below 4000. A decade ago, it was below 1600! Now I say when shooting in most situations to go for it, increase that ISO. Get the image first and worry about fixing it later. ✪

> "I STAND WITH A WIDE STANCE, KEEP MY ELBOWS CLOSE TO MY SIDE AND USE TWO HANDS WHERE POSSIBLE – ONE ON THE BODY AND ONE ON THE LENS."

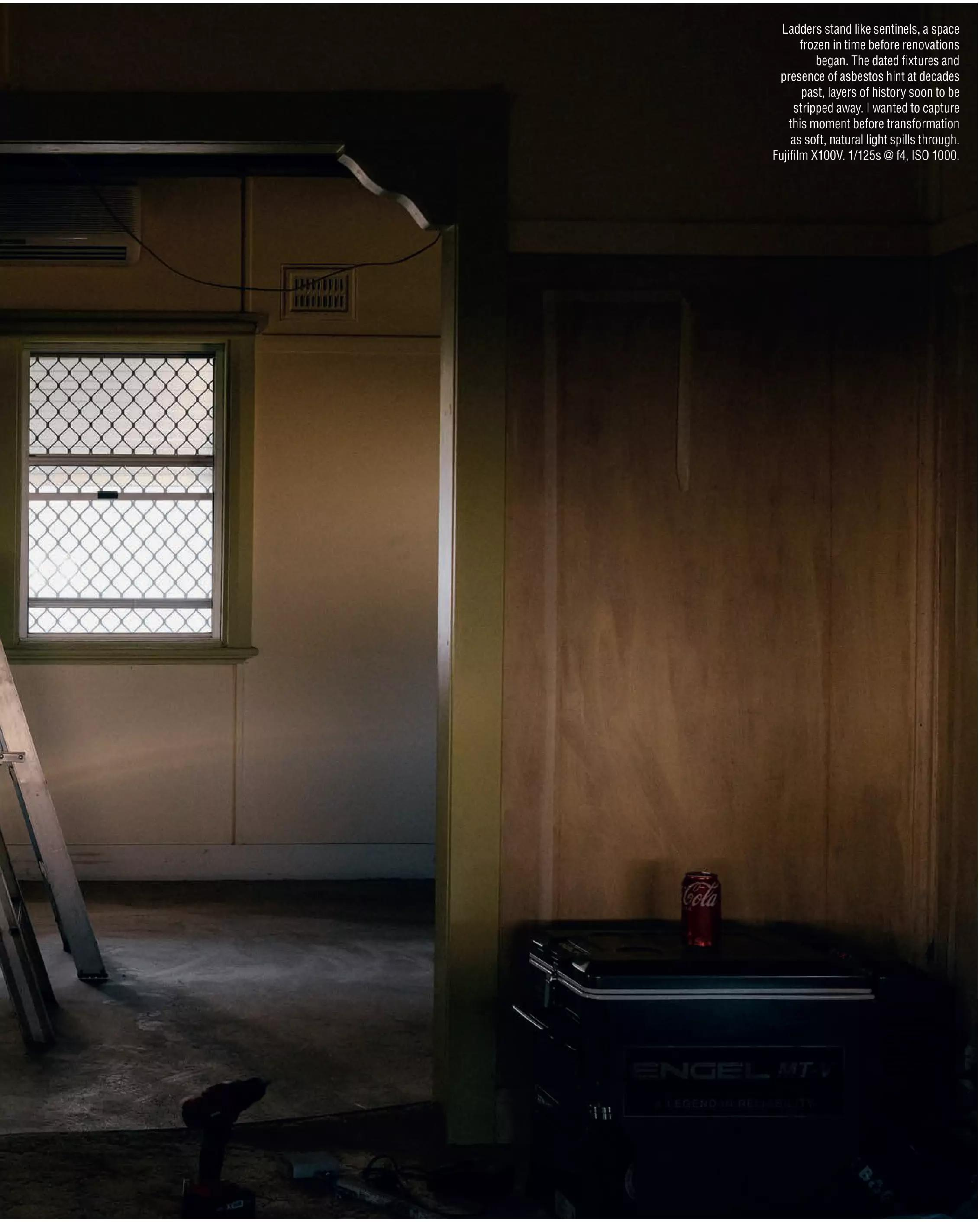


TURN EVERYDAY LIFE

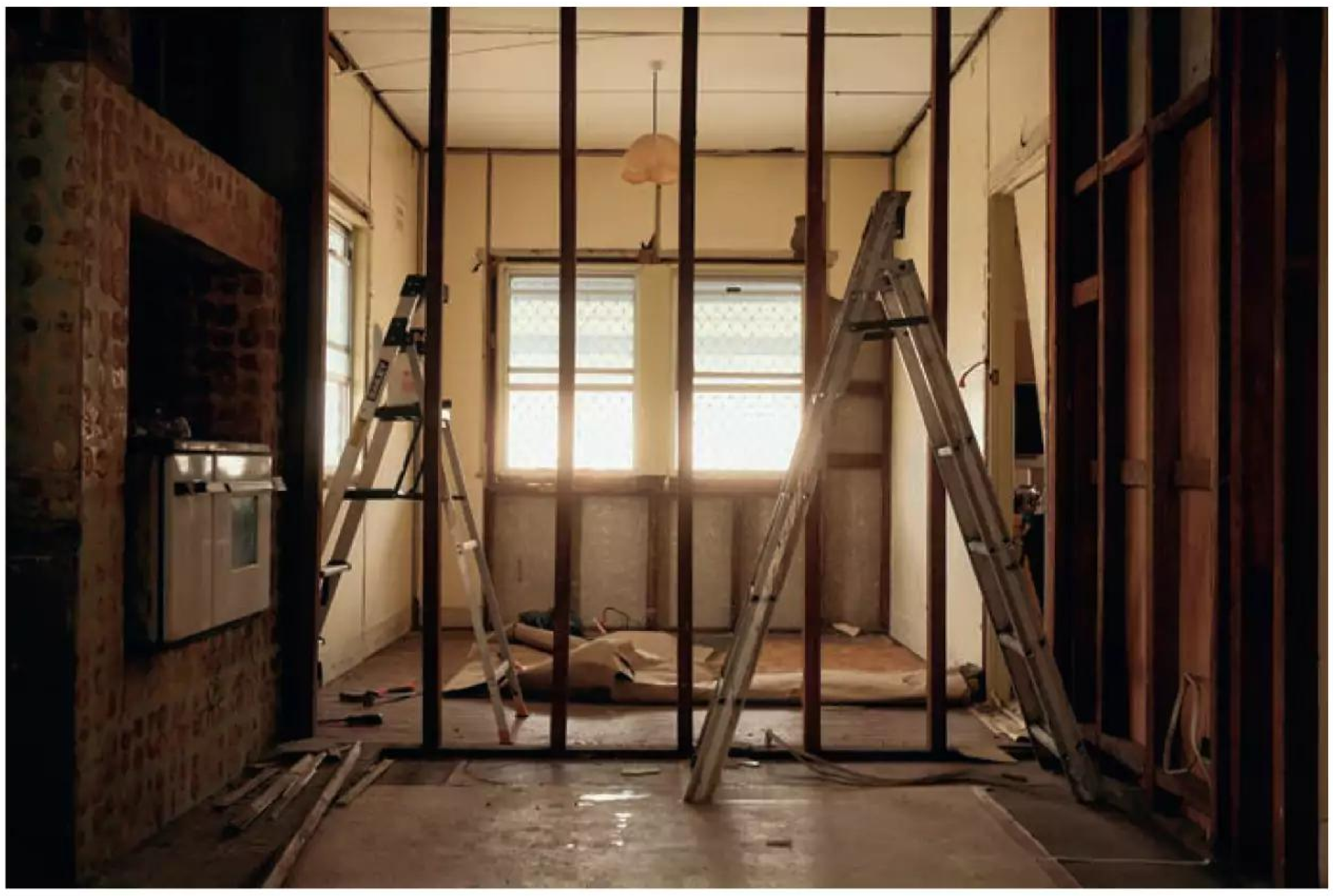
INTO YOUR OWN PHOTO PROJECT

BY DREW HOPPER

It may not be the most obvious thing to turn your camera towards, but the daily comings and goings of our lives can be a fun challenge to document. Here's how to get started.



Ladders stand like sentinels, a space frozen in time before renovations began. The dated fixtures and presence of asbestos hint at decades past, layers of history soon to be stripped away. I wanted to capture this moment before transformation as soft, natural light spills through. Fujifilm X100V. 1/125s @ f4, ISO 1000.



Photography doesn't always have to come from far-flung adventures or dramatic landscapes. In fact, some of the most compelling images are born out of the everyday – those small, seemingly mundane moments that define our lives.

Whether it's documenting a routine task or capturing the story of something significant to your family, these projects can offer deep creative satisfaction.

So, when my wife Jess and I embarked on renovating our first home in Grafton, Clarence Valley, I saw an opportunity to turn the chaos into an artistic exploration. What started as a practical undertaking evolved into a visual narrative of transformation, that also gives us a special visual record of how we did it.

Here's how you can turn the fabric of everyday life into your next photo project.

START WITH A SIMPLE CONCEPT

Every great project begins with an idea – sometimes so simple that it seems almost too obvious. A concept doesn't need to be groundbreaking; it just needs to resonate with you.

Think about aspects of your daily routine that catch your attention, whether it's cooking dinner, walking the dog, or, in my case, ripping out floorboards during our renovation.

The beauty of starting small is that it's achievable. You're not aiming to photograph the entirety of a big theme but rather exploring a single thread. By focusing on what's around you, you'll find there's no shortage of subjects to capture.

DEFINE YOUR FOCUS

Once you've chosen a concept, it's time to refine it. Ask yourself: What do I want this project to convey? For instance, with our renovation, I could have focused on the physical process of plastering walls and sanding floors or on the emotional journey, from frustration to triumph.

Defining your focus helps determine everything from the kinds of shots you'll take to the way you'll edit them. If you're drawn to aesthetics, hone in on lighting, textures, and symmetry. If you're more interested in storytelling, think about how each image will contribute to a larger narrative.

> **“ONE OF THE MOST REWARDING ASPECTS OF EVERYDAY LIFE PROJECTS IS THE ABILITY TO TRACK PROGRESSION...”**

CAPTURE THE PASSAGE OF TIME

One of the most rewarding aspects of everyday life projects is the ability to track progression. Whether it's a garden growing, a child learning to ride a bike, or – as in my case – a house transforming over months, the passage of time is a powerful visual element.

Techniques like time-lapse photography or a weekly series can help you document changes.

For example, during our renovations, I captured the same room from the same angle every week. These incremental changes became a fascinating visual diary of the work, and also helped reveal progress as we went along.

FIND ART IN DETAILS

Details often tell the best stories. In the context of our renovation, it wasn't just about the big picture – the newly painted walls or finished floor. It was also about the scratches on old timber, the dust caught in morning light, and the chaos of tools strewn across the room.

Everyday objects can become extraordinary under the right light or perspective. Look closely at textures, patterns, and colours. A pile of screws might not seem photogenic at first glance, but framed creatively, it can take on a life of its own.

CREATE A NARRATIVE

Every photo project benefits from a story arc, and everyday life is rich with them. Think about the natural progression of your subject – there are bound to be challenges, breakthroughs, and milestones along the way.

When I photographed our renovations, the story wasn't just about turning an old house into a new one. It was about Jess and me navigating the process together – the laughter, the frustration, the triumph of small victories, and this is also what I wanted to try and show.

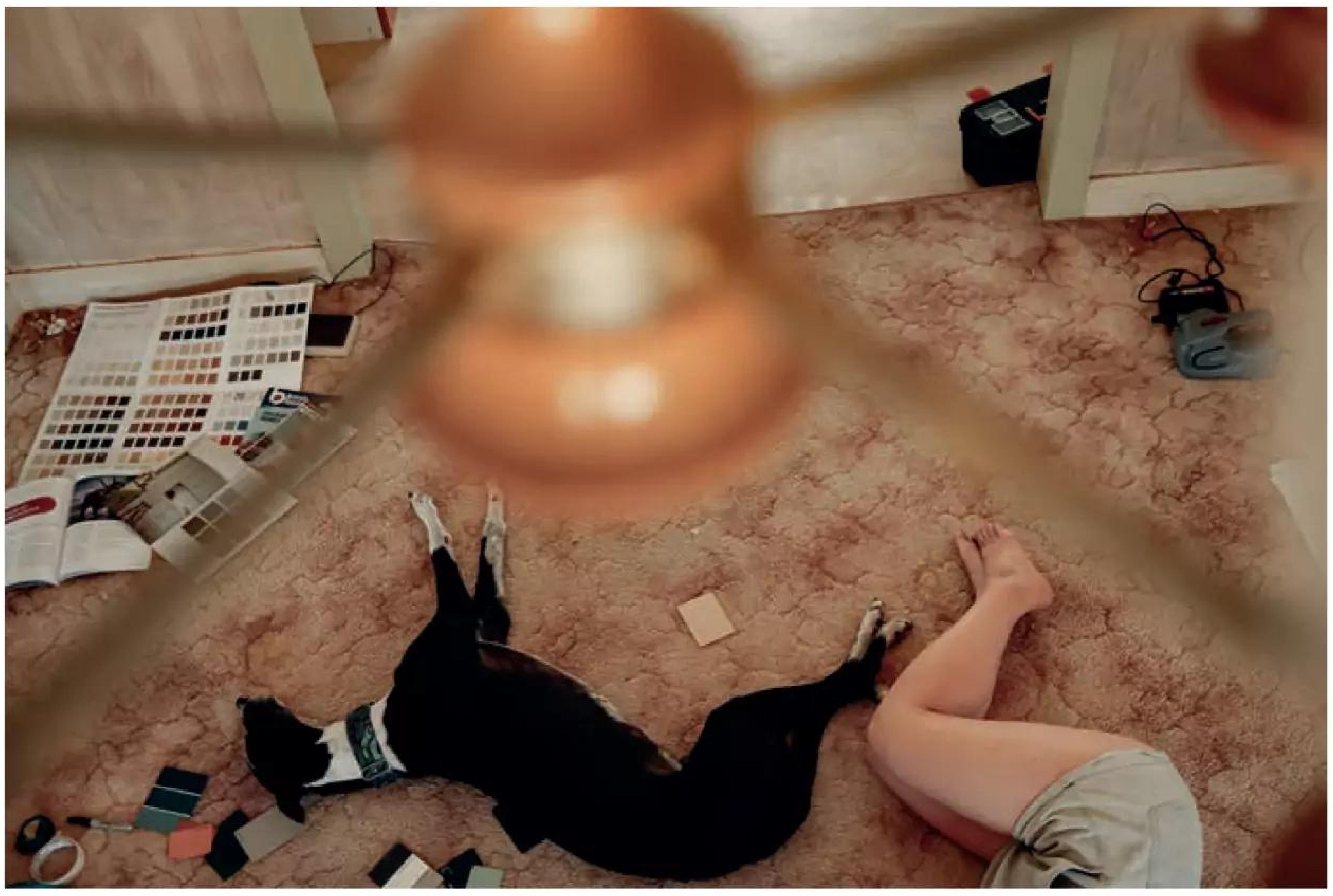
LEFT TO RIGHT: The freshly removed wall reveals the house's bones, an open space where the dining room will soon take shape. Fujifilm X100V. 1/20s @ f4, ISO 320;

My wife Jess stands in the backyard with our greyhound, the weight of a long day's work settling into the summer air. Framed beside the Hills Hoist, she becomes part of the story of our 1950s cottage. Fujifilm X100V. 1/125s @ f2, ISO 1600;

Jess captured this moment of me cutting floorboards, wood we pulled up and relaid with our own hands, and a new skill under our belts. This renovation is more than just change; it's a hands-on connection to the home, shaping it piece by piece. Fujifilm X100V. 1/125s @ f2, ISO 800;

The torn remnants of old wallpaper scatter across the floor, a quiet record of the home's past peeling away. Fujifilm X100V. 1/160s @ f2.8, ISO 400.

RHINO



TOP ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT:
I adjusted the white balance to bring warmth into the frame, emphasising how the light spills into our soon-to-be living room. The glow catches on the bare walls and horrid shag pile carpet. This space is changing, but in this moment, it feels alive with possibility. Fujifilm X100V. 1/150s @ f2.8, ISO 400;

At this stage in the renovation it really did feel like things had taken a turn and the house was now becoming a home. In order to capture such moments I always make sure my camera is within arms reach. Nikon Zf, 24-120mm f/4 lens @ 32mm. 1/1000s @ f4, ISO 200;

Jess lays on the carpet, taking a break after an intense brainstorming session on house colours. I framed her from above, looking through the overhanging chandelier light, layering depth and perspective into the shot. Framing is everything, whether in photography or rebuilding a home. It's all about lines, structure, and the spaces in between. Fujifilm X100V. 1/220s @ f2, ISO 800.

OPPOSITE: Jess stands in the kitchen, adjusting her face mask, caught in a moment that feels both cinematic and unposed. Fujifilm X100V. 1/60s @ f4, ISO 800.

Aim to tell a story that captures the essence of your experience, and one that resonates not just with you but with your audience.

USE CONSISTENT AESTHETICS

A cohesive aesthetic ties a project together and transforms it from a random collection of images into a unified body of work. Think about your editing style: Will you lean toward bright, vibrant tones, or are you drawn to moody, desaturated hues?

During my renovation project, I leaned into warm, earthy tones to reflect the natural materials we worked with. Keeping consistent lighting, composition, and colour grading helped create a visual flow that held the series together.

EXPERIMENT WITH DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

Don't be afraid to play around with angles and perspectives. Shooting from eye level is easy, but the real magic often happens when you change things up. Get down low, climb up high, or try shooting through objects for a layered effect.

During our renovations, I found myself lying on the floor to capture the texture of freshly sanded wood or balancing on a ladder to photograph the chaotic scene from above. These different perspectives added visual variety and kept the project dynamic.

INVOLVE PERSONAL ELEMENTS

The beauty of documenting everyday life lies in its intimacy. Including personal touches – whether it's family members, pets, or cherished objects – adds depth and meaning to your work. In our renovation photos, Jess often made an appearance, whether it was her hands gripping a paint roller or her silhouette against a newly finished wall. These personal elements helped ground the project in the emotional journey we shared.

EMBRACE IMPERFECTION

Life is messy, and that's where its authenticity lies. Don't shy away from capturing flaws and imperfections. The splattered paint, the broken tiles, the moments of exhaustion – they're all part of the story.

Some of my favourite images from our renovation are the least polished ones: tools scattered across the room, an unsteady handprint on the wall, or a moment of frustration captured mid-laugh. These raw moments bring depth and honesty to your work. There really is beauty in the least expected moments.

PRESENTING YOUR WORK

Once you've completed your project, think about how to share it. A photo book can give your work a tangible form, while an online gallery or social media series can make it accessible to a wider audience.

When curating your images, think about the order in which they'll appear. Aim to create a rhythm, alternating between wide shots and close-ups, light and dark, busy and calm. Let the sequence tell the story in a way that feels intentional and complete.

Everyday life is brimming with creative potential, it just takes a shift in perspective to see it. By turning something as routine as a home renovation into a photo project, I discovered not just a story worth telling but also a deeper connection to the process itself.

Whatever your life looks like, there's a project waiting to be uncovered. The small moments, the daily tasks, the fleeting emotions, they're all part of a bigger picture. Pick up your camera and start exploring the beauty in the ordinary. You might just find that your own life holds more inspiration than you ever imagined, and who knows, maybe you'll inspire someone else to tell their story. ✪

UNDERSTANDING THE TONE CURVE

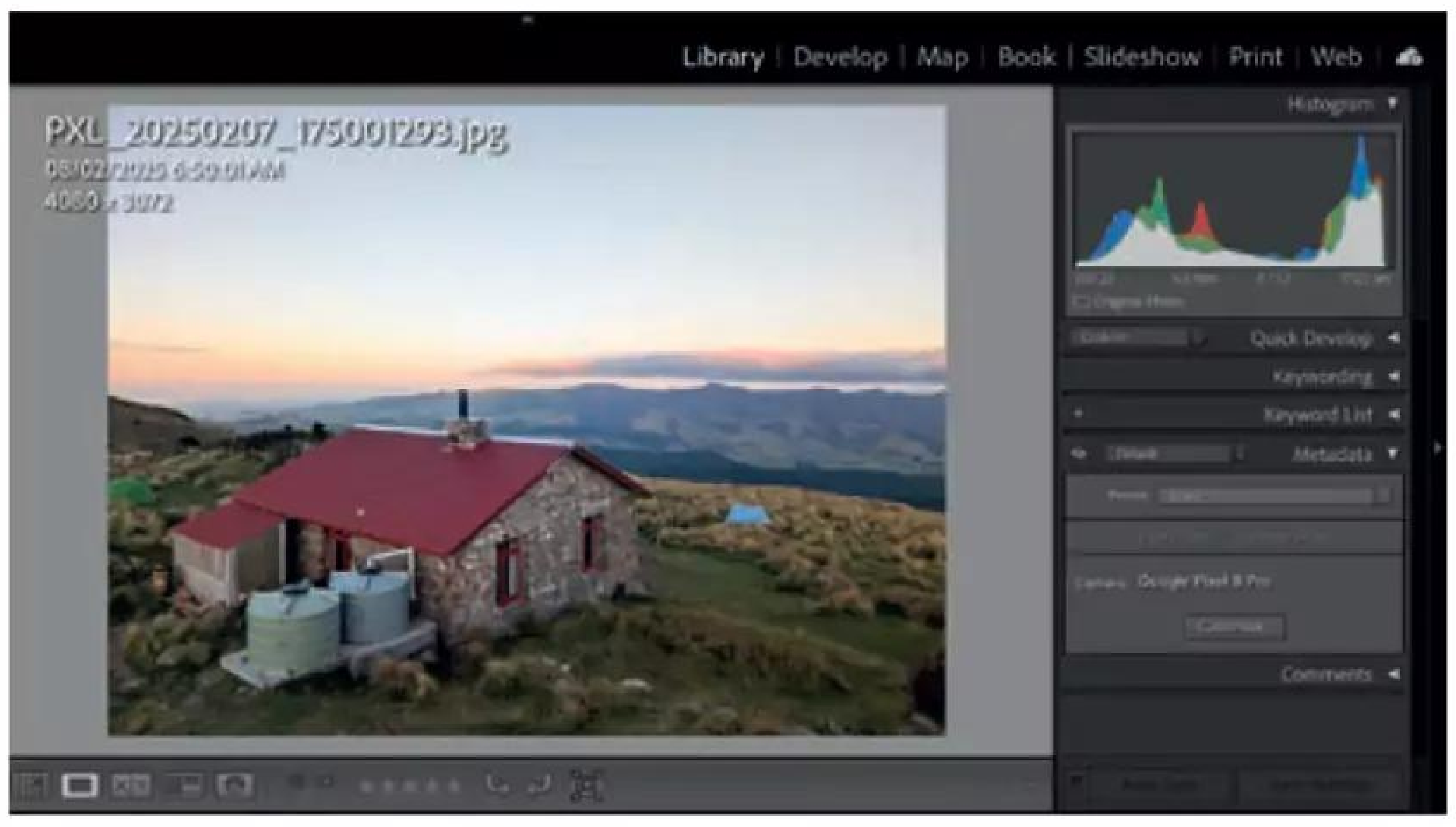
BY MIKE O'CONNOR

The Lightroom Tone Curve is a graph-based tool that lets you adjust the tones and colours of precise portions of an image. Here's a quick guide to using it.

1

OPEN YOUR IMAGE IN LIGHTROOM

First, we'll start by importing and selecting the image you want to edit in Lightroom. Then, go to the Develop module to access the editing tools.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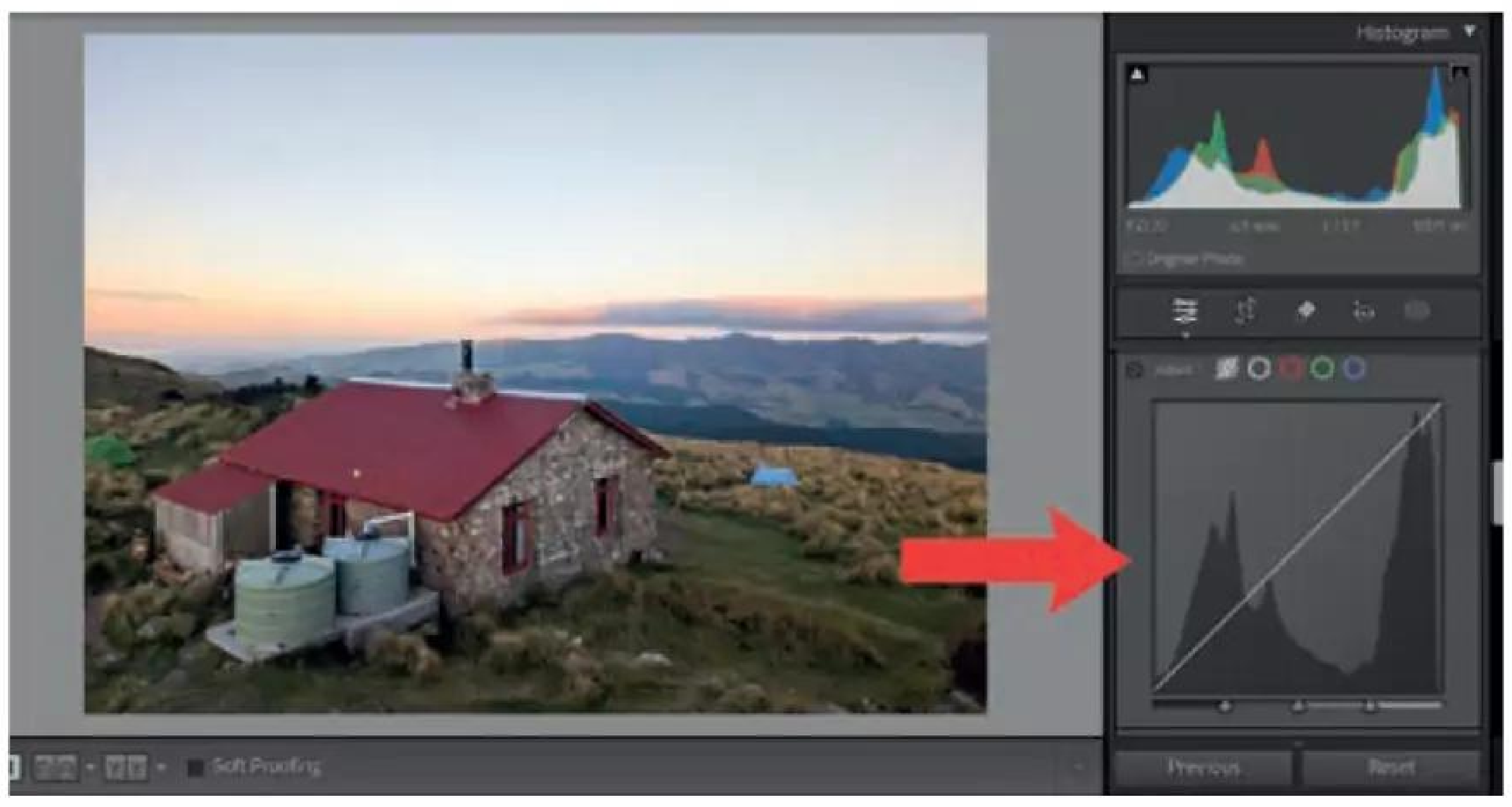
4080 x 3072
Histogram
Quick Develop
Keywording
Keyword List
Metadata
Comments

2

ACCESS THE TONE CURVE

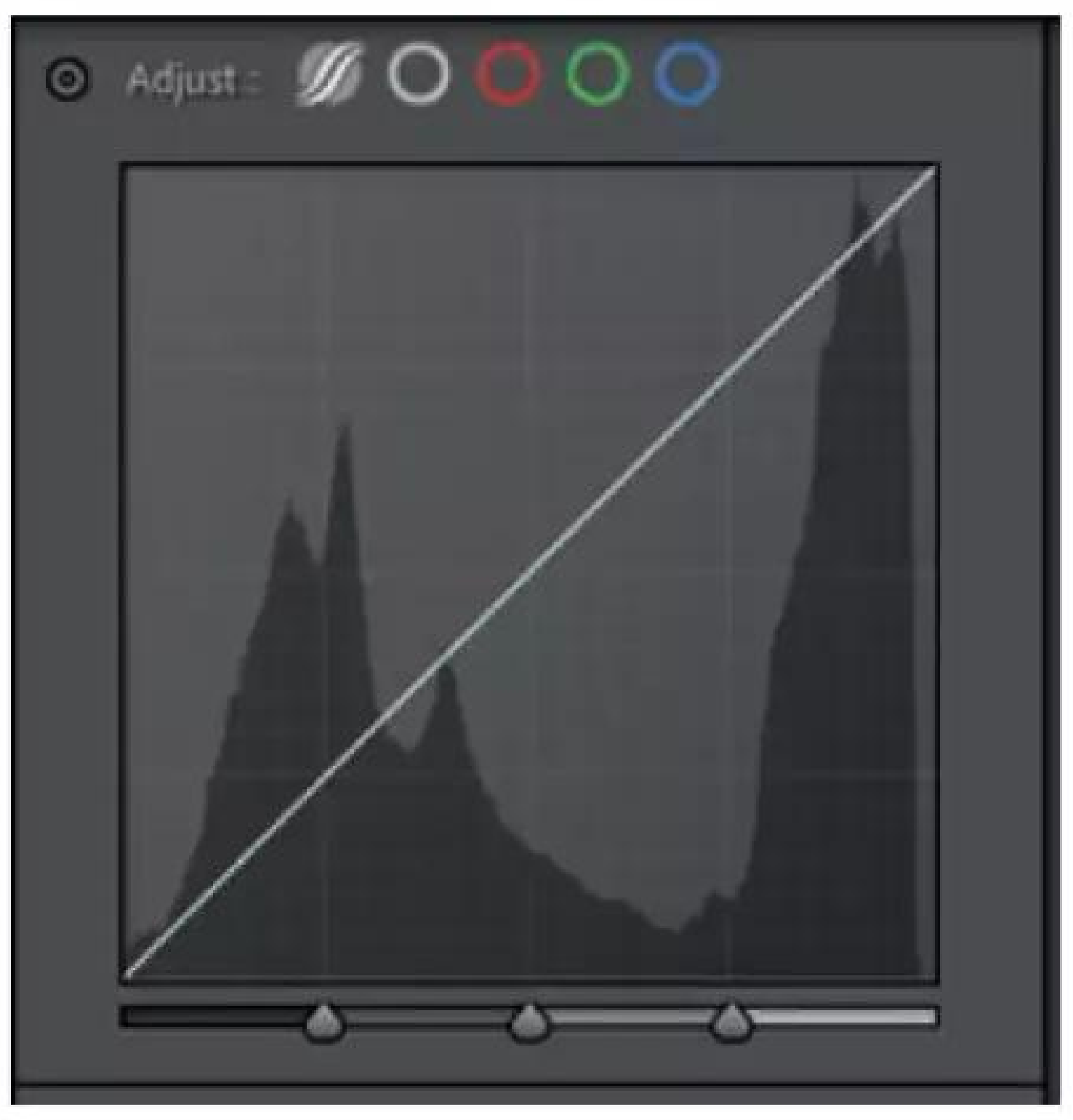
On the right-hand panel, scroll down to find the Tone Curve panel, and click to expand the Tone Curve section to reveal the curve graph.


Histogram
Soft Proofing
Previous
Reset

3

UNDERSTAND THE TONE CURVE INTERFACE

The curve is divided into four regions: Shadows (left), Darks (bottom left), Lights (top right), and Highlights (right). The horizontal axis represents input tones (shadows to highlights), while the vertical axis represents output tones (lightness of the image).



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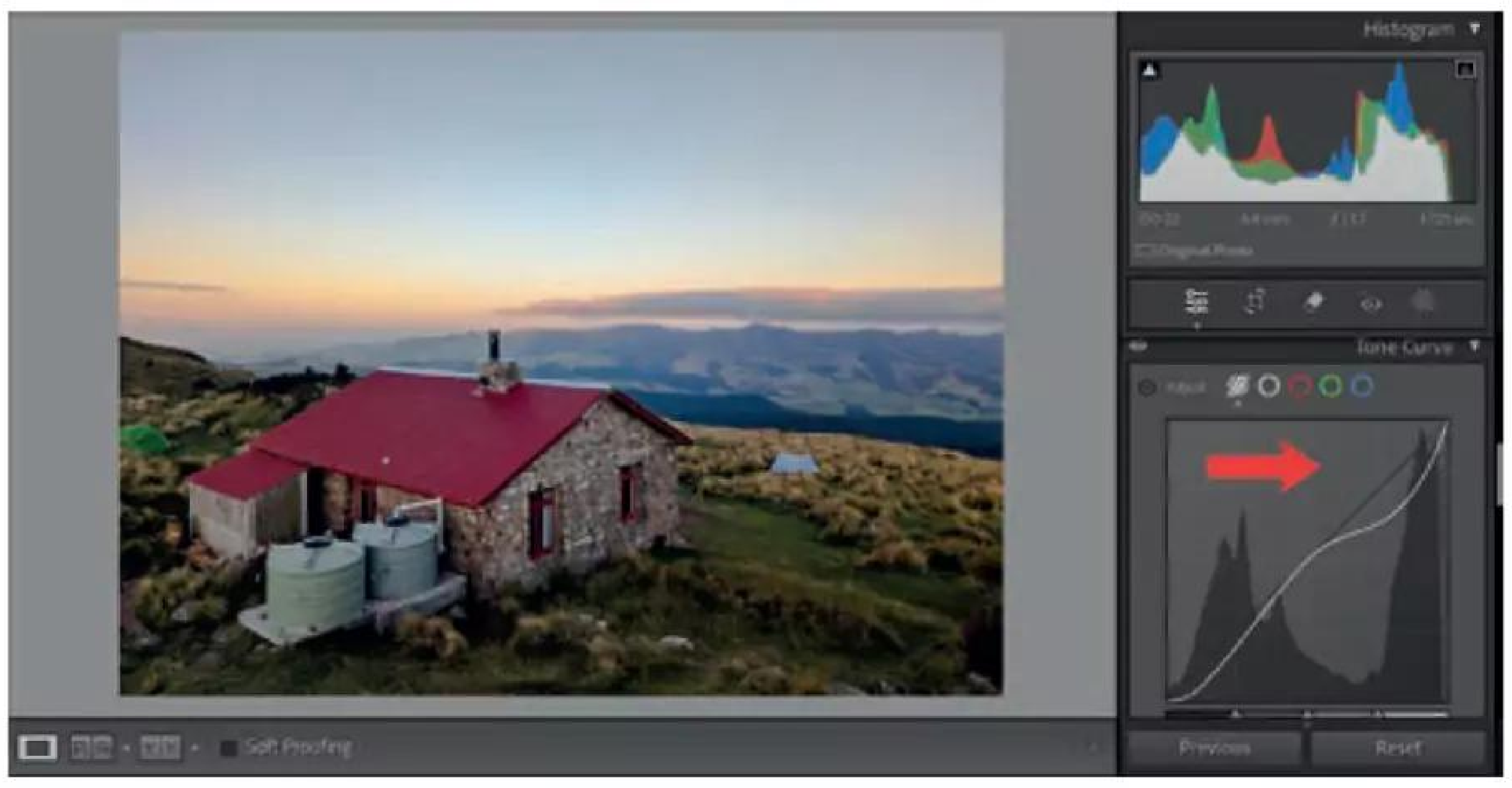
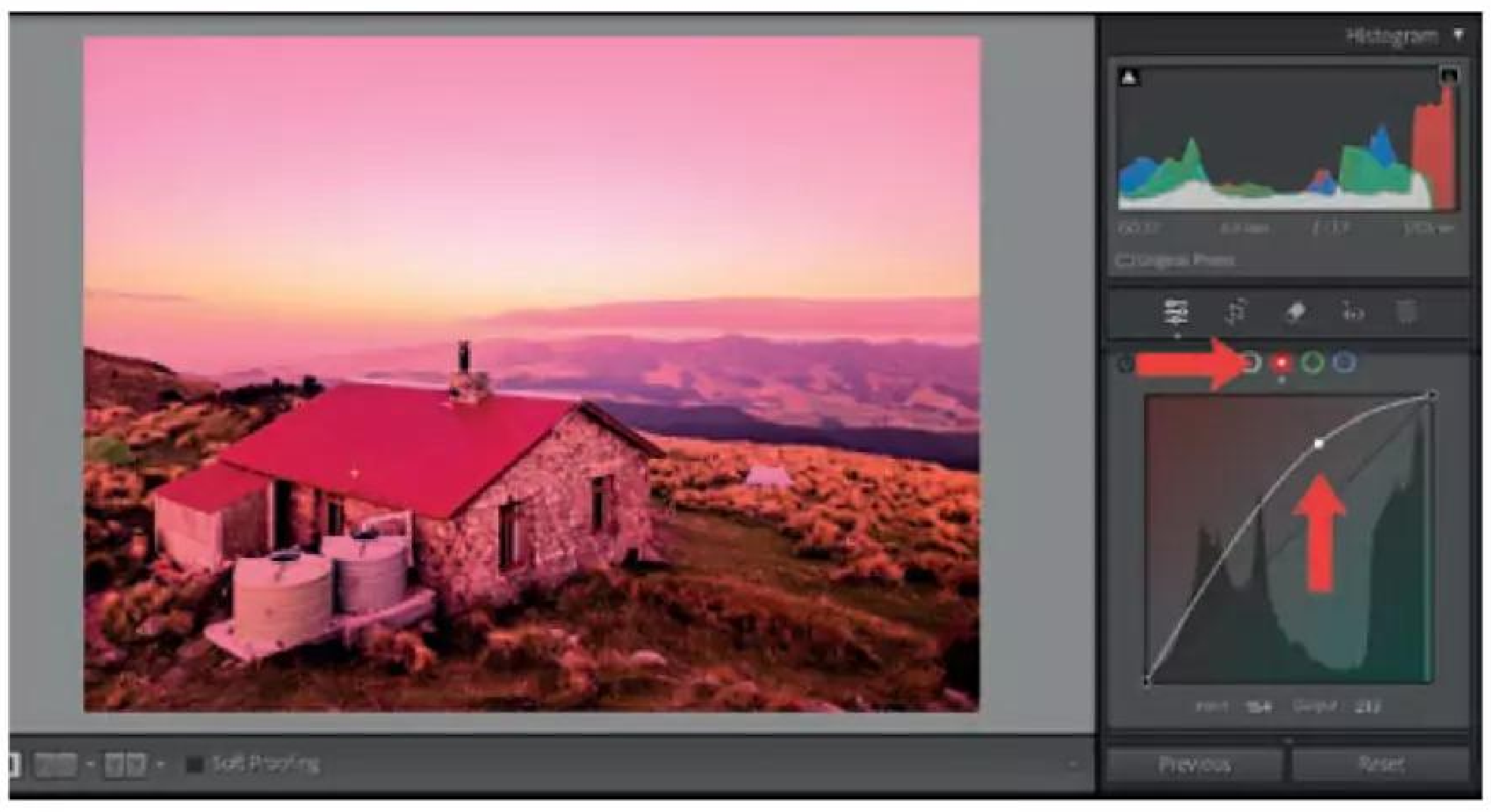

Histogram
Tone Curve
Soft Proofing
Previous
Reset

MAKE ADJUSTMENTS TO THE CURVE

To adjust the Shadows, Midtones, and Highlights, click directly on the curve to create points, then drag them to adjust different tonal ranges.

- Shadows: Drag the left side of the curve downward to darken shadows, or upward to lighten them.
- Midtones: Move the middle of the curve up or down to adjust brightness without affecting the extremes.
- Highlights: Drag the right side of the curve upward to brighten highlights, or downward to darken them.
- S-curve for Contrast: A common technique is creating an S-curve by dragging the shadows downward and the highlights upward, which increases contrast.


Histogram
Soft Proofing
Previous
Reset

5

FINE-TUNE WITH THE POINT CURVE OR RGB CHANNELS

To make more advanced adjustments, you can toggle between the RGB curve (all channels) or adjust individual Red, Green, or Blue channels for colour-specific changes.

Adjusting the Red curve, for example, will shift the overall red tones in your image. You can tweak specific colour channels to balance the colour tones in your image, giving it a warmer or cooler look.

Once you're happy with the adjustments, your image's tonal range should be enhanced, giving it more depth and vibrancy.

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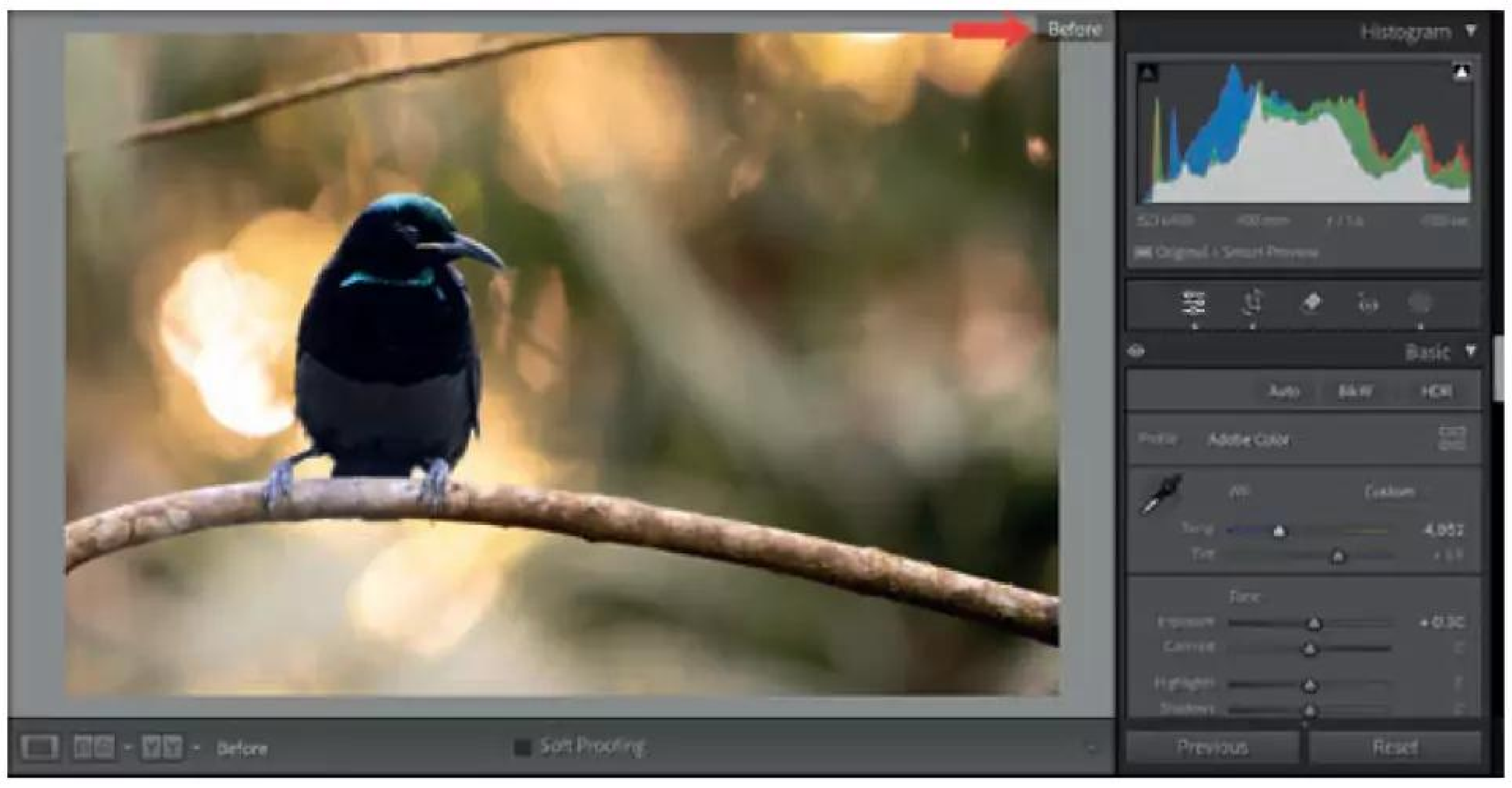
SHORTCUT SECRETS

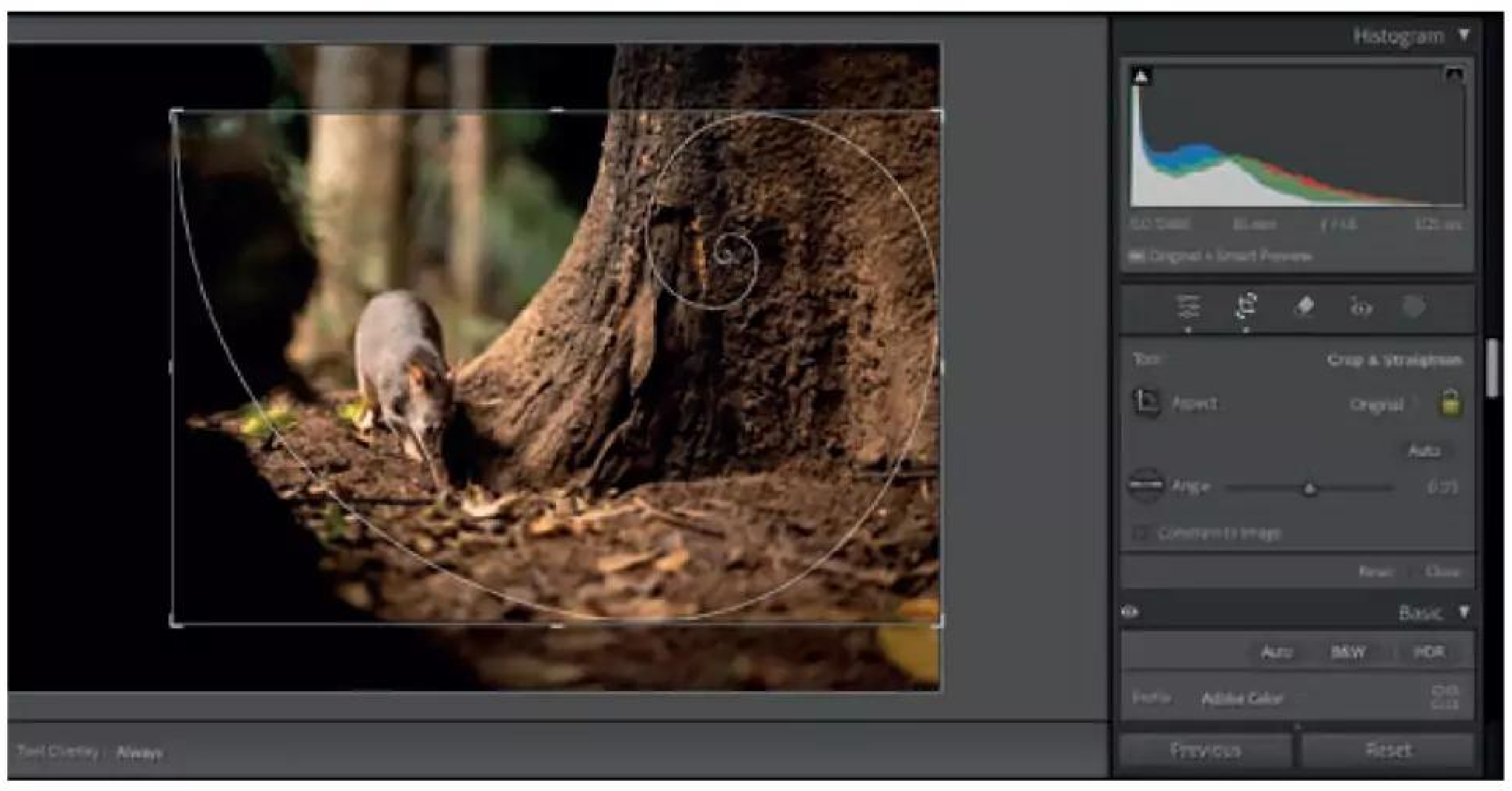
Adobe's Lightroom is a brilliant image editing tool, but where it comes into its own is when you learn some of its hundreds of intuitive shortcuts. They'll speed up your image editing workflow, and have you dancing over the keys like a maestro. Here are five handy ones.

1 SWITCH TO BEFORE/AFTER VIEW (WITHOUT HISTORY)

***Shortcut: ***

This shortcut toggles between the current editing and the original version of your photo, which is great for quickly comparing your edits.

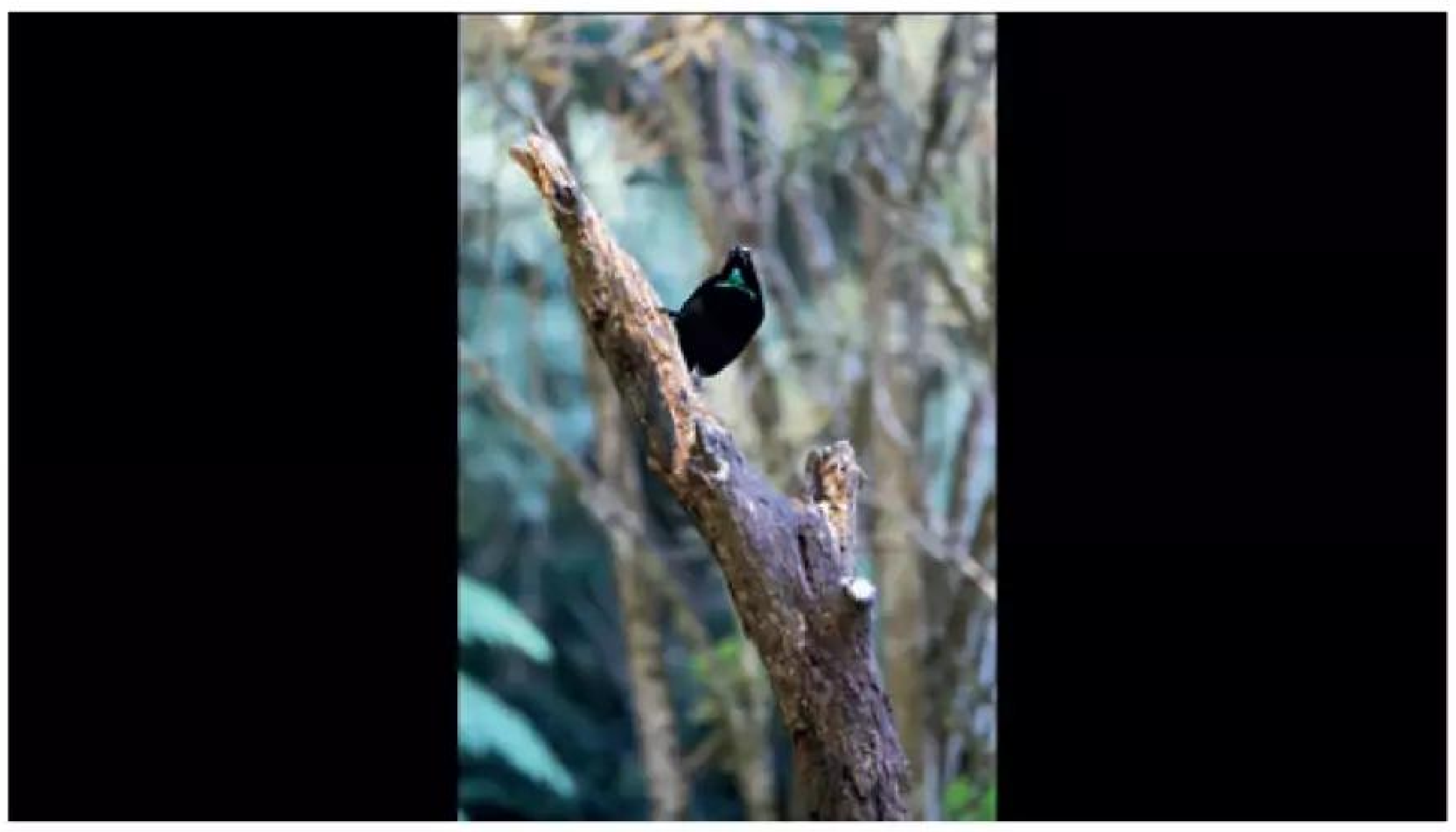




2 SHOW/HIDE OVERLAYS (CROP TOOL)

Shortcut: O

When you're using the Crop Tool, pressing the letter O cycles through different overlay grid types, which can be helpful for composition.



3 TOGGLE FULL-SCREEN MODE

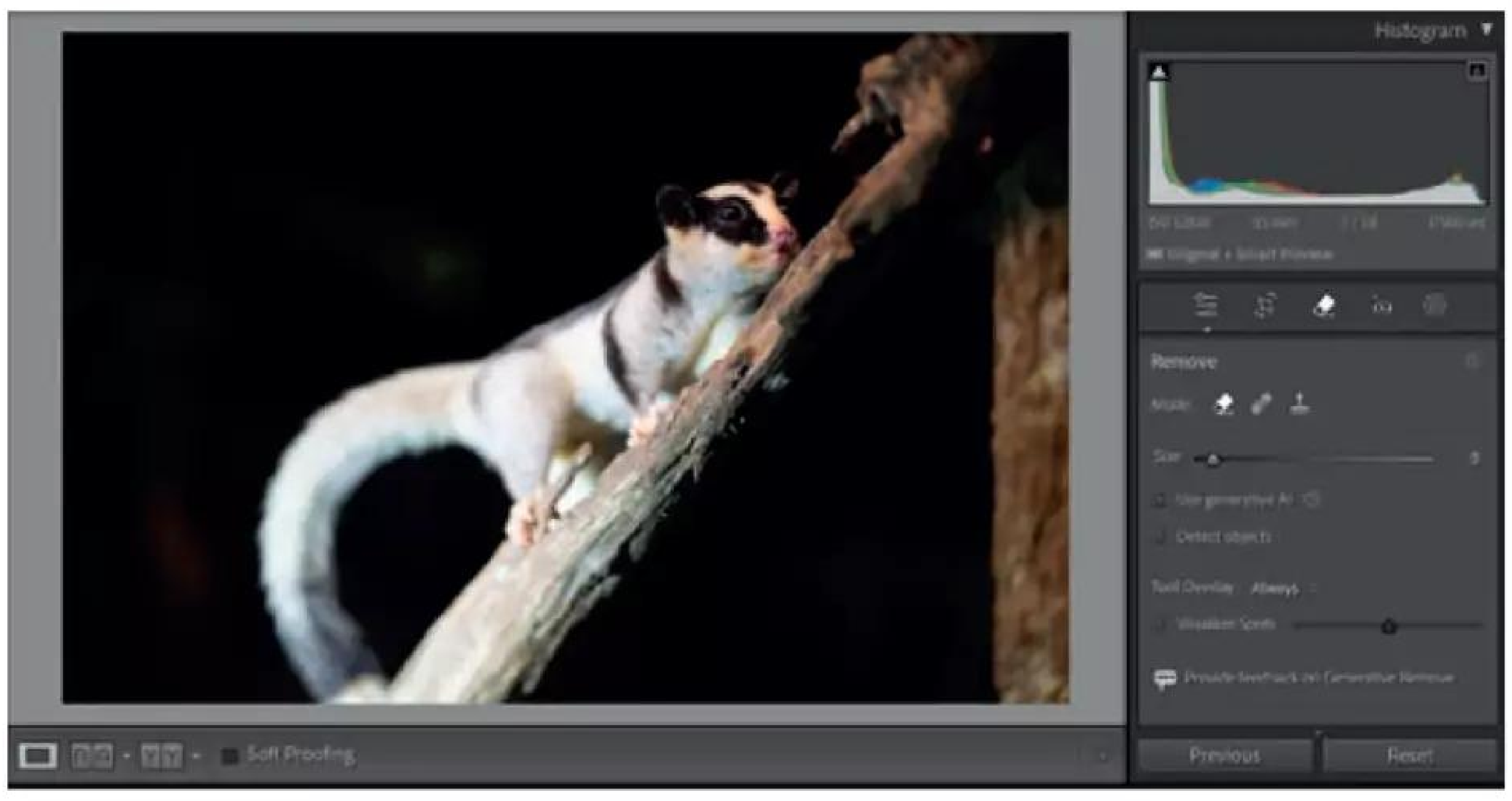
Shortcut: F

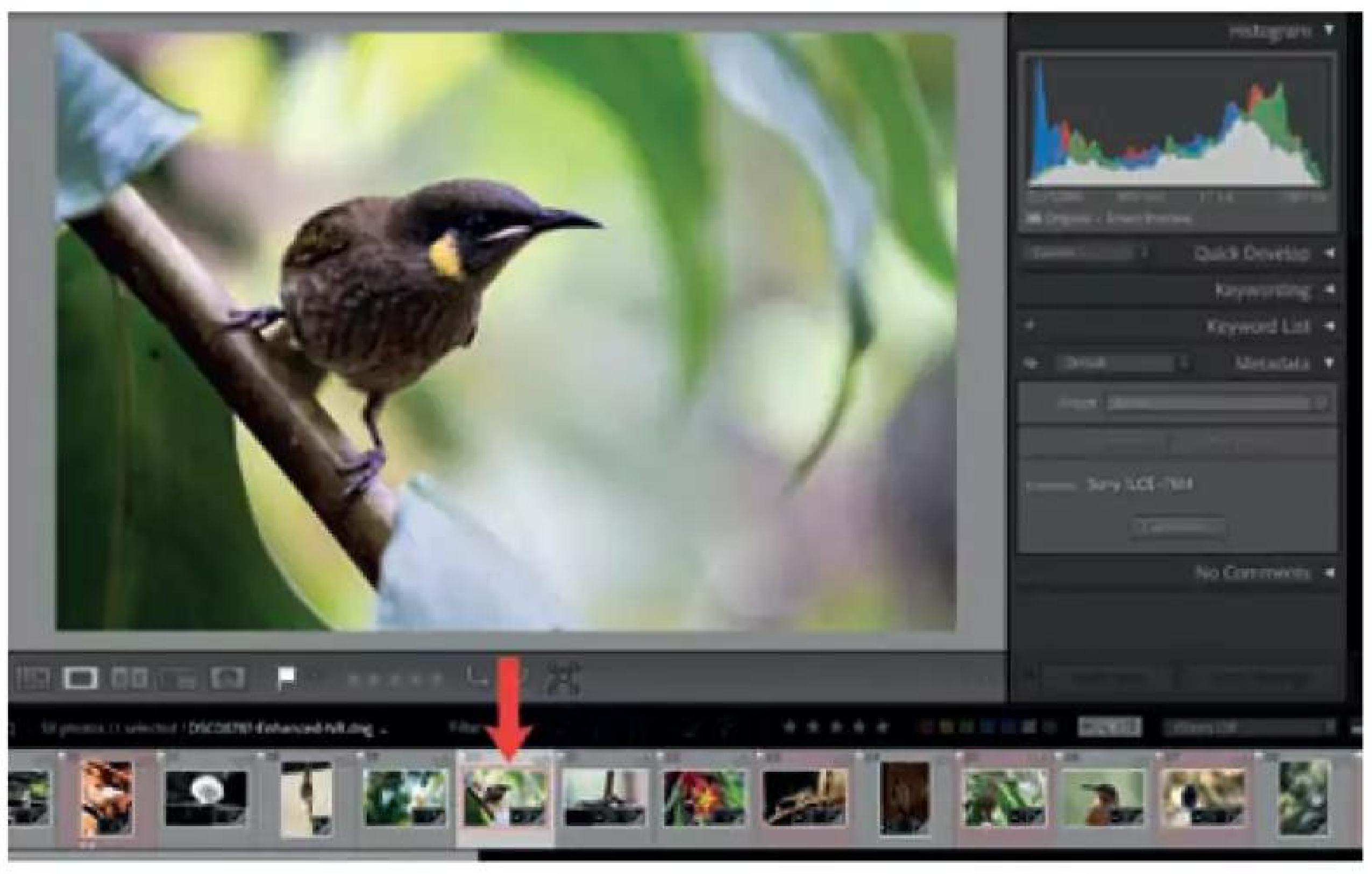
One of my most well-used shortcuts, pressing F enters and exits full-screen mode, giving you more room to work with and focus on your image without distractions.

4 TOGGLE THE SPOT REMOVAL TOOL (CLONE/HEAL)

Shortcut: Q

This brings up the Spot Removal tool in the Develop module - one of the most useful shortcuts!





5 CYCLE THROUGH THE COLOUR LABELS

Shortcut: 6, 7, 8, 9

These keys assign colour labels to photos (Red, Yellow, Green, Blue, Purple). You can use these to mark images for various purposes, like flagging or organising your selects. You can also star rate by selecting 1-5.

The PD20M's party trick is its handy magnetic ability to affix to your phone – or anything else magnetic for that matter.

TEAM GROUP PD20M PORTABLE SSD

Team Group's PD20M drive offers a unique solution for smartphone users who need to expand their onboard storage. Mike O'Connor takes a look.

With its tiny form factor, magnetic functionality, and affordable pricing, Team Group's PD20M looks to solve the problem of limited storage in a neat and clever way.

BUILD QUALITY

Team Group has really targeted this SSD at iPhone 15 users, and in particular those who shoot high-quality video modes like Apple ProRes 4K that require dedicated external storage to record since native recording onto internal storage isn't possible.

Unfortunately I'm not an iPhone user, and the drive wouldn't stick to my relatively ancient and magsafe-less Google Pixel 8, but Team Group did mention that the drive will work with a magsafe case if you don't have the required magnetism on your device.

The PD20M is made from a single piece of aluminium alloy, albeit with a plastic backing. At just 8.2mm thick, the drive is also thinner than just about any smartphone I'm aware of, barely adding any bulk to your phone, and is also super lightweight at just 40g.

On the rear, the drive has a soft pad section that means it won't scratch your precious device either.

In use, I found holding my phone with the PD20M attached (via a piece of velcro) was quite comfortable, and didn't make the device feel bulky or unbalanced.

It really is so light and thin that you barely notice it's there, and you could easily just let it hang from your device's USB-C port with little worry that it would tear out due to weight.

Once connected, the drive integrated seamlessly with the onboard camera on my Pixel, appearing immediately in the Files app or by selecting Browse in supported apps, and opening up a ton more storage possibilities.

The PD20M uses a USB Type-C interface, and meets the USB 3.2 Gen2 x1 specifications of Apple's iPhone 15 Pro. This means it's capable of achieving that port type's maximum transmission speed of 10 Gbps.

Unfortunately, my 2020 Macbook Pro is one of those and only has lowly USB-C Generation 2 ports, but I was still able to achieve read and write speeds of around 930 mb/s read and 894 mb/s write – still impressive.

THE WRAP-UP

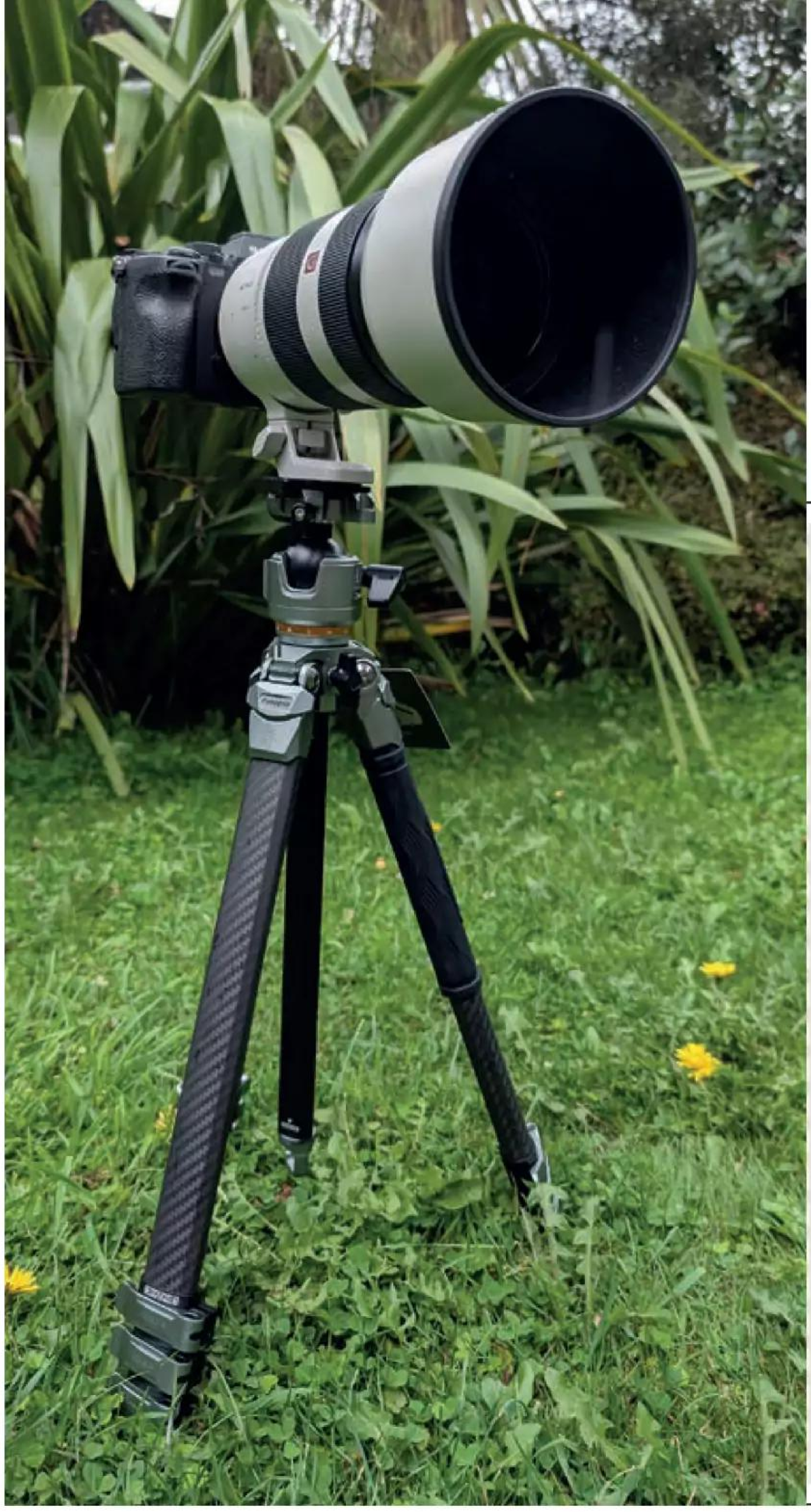
The tiny size, feather-like weight and slick compatibility with Magsafe makes the PD20M easily the most seamless external SSD of this kind I've used.

It's a fast drive too, and although there are are the usual issues around the USB 3.2 Gen 2x2 port when it comes to the limited number of devices offering this port type, even the 'standard' speeds are pretty impressive.

Combine this with a really reasonable price tag for a compact 1TB drive, and the Team Group PD20M comes with our highest recommendation.

This is a great drive for creatives on the go and those who want a small, fast and versatile SSD. ✪

The Team Group PD20M retails for around $179 AUD (1TB) and $299 (2TB), and is available from retailers including jw.com.au and Amazon, among others.



FOTOPRO ORIGIN PLUS TRAVEL TRIPOD

Chinese company Fotopro's newest product is the Origin travel tripod, a carbon fibre tripod and ballhead that supports up to a whopping 20kg of load, yet weighs only 1.33kg and folds down to a compact 499mm.
Mike O'Connor checks it out.

For this review, I tested the Origin Plus with an Arca-Swiss ballhead, which retails for about $299 USD ($475 AUD), making it competitively priced for a fully featured carbon model.

THE BUILD

Build wise, this is a beautifully engineered tripod with solid metal and carbon features that combine to create a really premium product.

It's well-thought out too, with nice features like a rubber sleeve around one of the tripod legs to help grip the thing, and diamond shaped tubes for the legs.

All of the flip locks on the legs use the company's patented 'X-Airfly' spring-loaded system, which the company says have passed durability tests for over 5,000 open and closes.

Fotopro's included ballhead is similarly well-designed. It's solid and made of a nice matte metal.

All the knobs are also knurled, and move with a smooth action.

I really appreciated that the ballhead also offers a dedicated 'panoramic platform', essentially a dedicated knob that isolates movement on the ballhead to just left to right or right to left to make shooting smooth panos much easier.

Another great feature is the Origin's hidden spiked feet. Simply pull off the rubber feet, and a metal spike is revealed. It's a neat feature and a nice change from the usual situation of spiked feet being an additional purchase.

Finally, the Origin comes with a well-made bag with waterproof zips, three spare rubber feet (another nice touch) and a couple of spare allen keys to round out the package.

In use, I found the Origin tripod a cinch to setup. The flip locks at the base are easy to grab and to open and close, even with gloves.

In addition, each lock has an alley key mount for making finer adjustments to the tension, and I also liked that they opened and closed with a reassuring click. The allen key is shared with the tool for removing the centre column.

At the top of the legs, the locks that allow you to adjust the position of the legs are also robust and solid, and I liked the simple design of pushing them out to open and then pushing them back in to close.

The tripod legs can be adjusted to almost a full 90 degrees by lifting out these metal clips, and in all positions the ribbed section gives a handy visual cue as to where on the axis the leg is positioned, speeding up setup in the field.

In terms of testing, I mounted my Sony A7 IV and 100-400mm f4.5-5.6 lens (about 2kg) and the setup was solid.

In fact, I think few setups would ever get close to the 20kg weight limit. Unfortunately I didn't get to test the tripod in any extreme weather, but I had little reason to doubt its robustness.

THE WRAP-UP

A tripod is a big investment, and especially so if you're not 100% sure what your use case for it will be into the future, or you're a photographer who shoots a little bit of everything.

Buying a versatile tripod is especially important, and that's really what you get with the Fotopro Origin Plus.

It can carry a hefty payload, has a smart design and a solid, well-made build, all while not being overly heavy.

If you're looking for a tripod that offers plenty of features for all different kinds of photography, we can recommend the Fotopro Origin Plus highly. ✪

DO YOU NEED A CAMERA CAGE?

BY TIM ROBINSON

As your videography skills develop, it's likely you'll start to consider a cage to manage all the accessories the format requires.

As a photographer that is also a videographer, the first accessory that I will add to a new camera is a camera cage. While some may view it as an unnecessary add-on, I rely on cages to improve handling, expand mounting options, and for protection of my gear.

Here's why you might want to choose one too.

1 ENHANCED PROTECTION

A camera is a significant investment, and any accidental drop or bump can lead to costly repairs. A cage provides a solid metal frame around the camera, acting as a shield against impact. This is particularly useful for outdoor or action photographers working in unpredictable environments where bumps and scrapes are common.

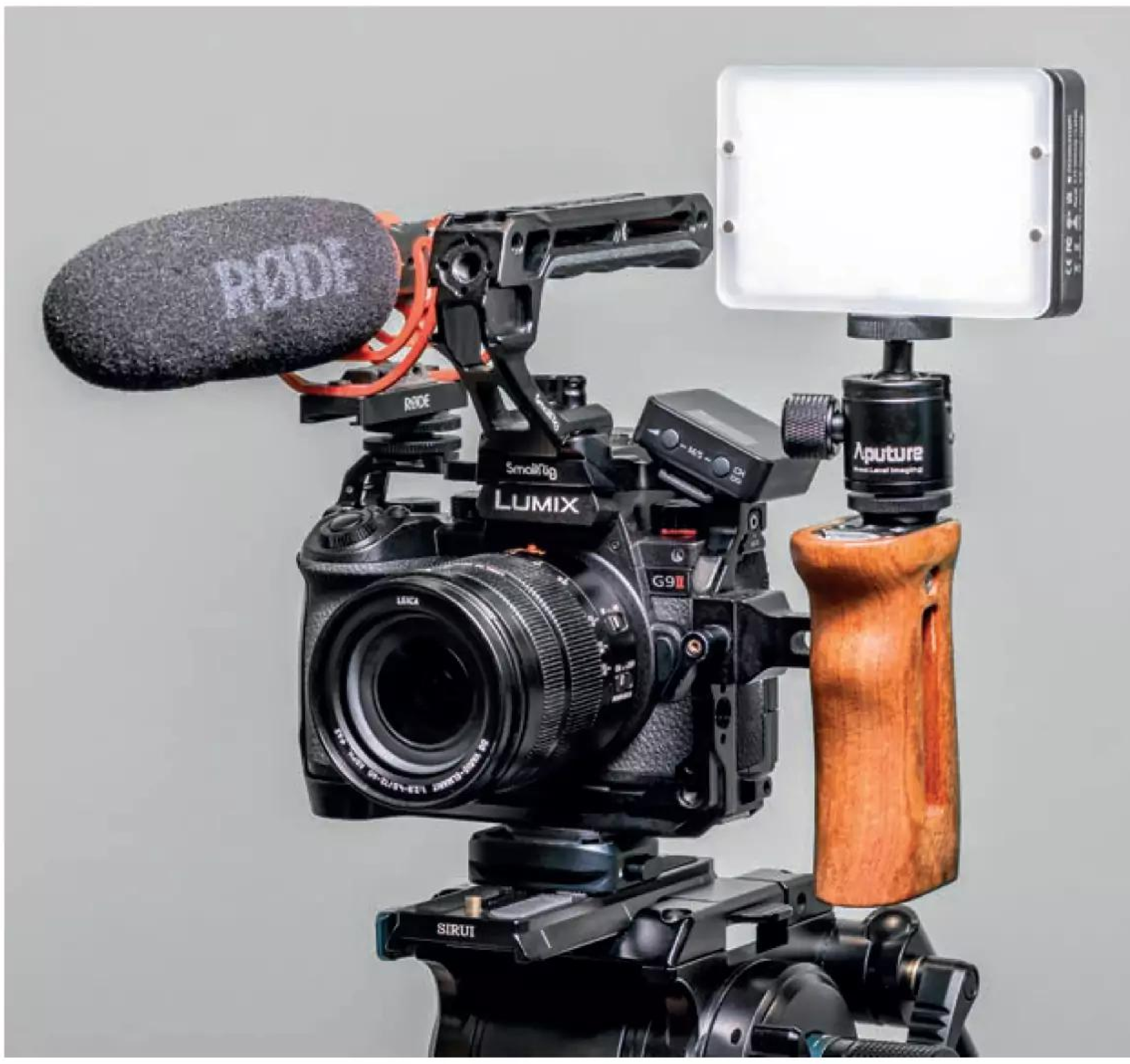
2 EXPANDED MOUNTING OPTIONS

Most mirrorless cameras only offer two mounting points – a screw thread for a tripod base plate and a hot shoe mount. Add a cage and you will have multiple mounting options. These may include a built in Arca-Swiss quick release plate, cold-shoe mounts, NATO rails, strap slots, ARRI locating holes, 1/4"-20 and 3/8"-16 threaded holes. Then how you rig it is up to you.

With these mounting options it allows you to attach a number of accessories, such as microphones, LED lights, monitors, hard drives or power banks. This eliminates the need for additional brackets or clamps, keeping the setup clean and organised.

3 IMPROVED HANDLING AND ERGONOMICS

Once a cage is on your camera you have a few options to make it more ergonomic. A side handle, a hand strap or top handle will help when shooting at different angles or when carrying the camera for extended periods.



This added stability can be especially beneficial for handheld video shooting in fast-paced situations.

A cage will add around 300 grams to your camera, plus the weight of any accessories you decide to add to it. While this extra weight can add more stability in some situations, if you attach too many accessories your rig can become weighed down and cumbersome.

For me, the additional mounting points make it a no brainer for video production and the added protection is great peace of mind. ✪

ISOLATION

A desire to experiment with creative captures led to this moody, atmospheric composite. Here's how it was made.

WITH RICHARD LI

I am a member of St George Photography Society in Kogarah, NSW.

While my photography interests mainly cover portraiture, architecture, macro and street photography, I have probably spent more time capturing creative compositions in the last three years.

After COVID, I wanted to create an image reflecting the impact of the pandemic on our society, but in a creative way.

The image is a composite which consists of three images. Buildings from Canberra, a cage from Angel Place in Sydney's CBD, and an image of myself in shadow, with my hand raised up to represent a sense of struggle.

Three images were imported into Adobe Lightroom Classic. I first adjusted the Tonality with the aid of the histogram, before transferring the images into Photoshop CC.

From here, the Canberra buildings were converted to black and white, and a motion blur filter was added to give a turbulent effect. Compositionally, the cage was put on the upper right-hand side to balance out the buildings, and the subject was 'locked' in a cage to reflect isolation. I used a variety of dodging and burning techniques to draw the viewer into the image.

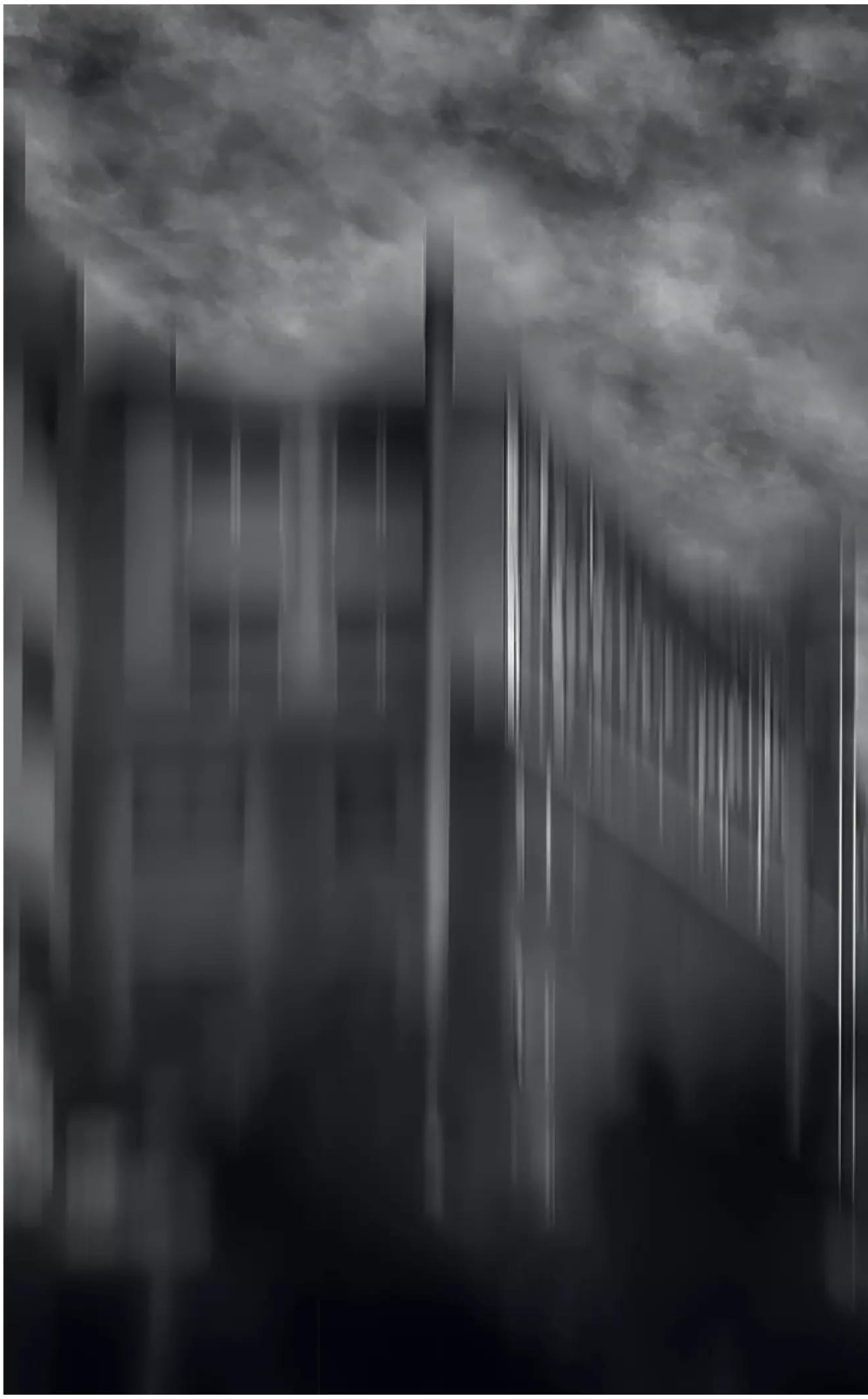
Finally, I added grey clouds in the sky to create a dramatic atmosphere.

I deliberately wanted to guide the viewer to view the image from left to right, therefore only the cage and subject are in focus. In total, nearly 30 layers were used in the image's creation.

The image did well in our club's monthly creative evaluation and went on to win first place in the Creative Digital category at the Warragul National Competition 2022. Since then, it has also done well in national and international competitions.

IMAGE FROM ANGEL PLACE: NIKON D750, 24-140MM LENS @ 100 MM. 1/60S @ F5.6, ISO 400.

CANBERRA BUILDINGS AND SELF-PORTRAIT: PANASONIC DMC-TZ110 @ 20MM. 1/640S @ F5.6, ISO 125.



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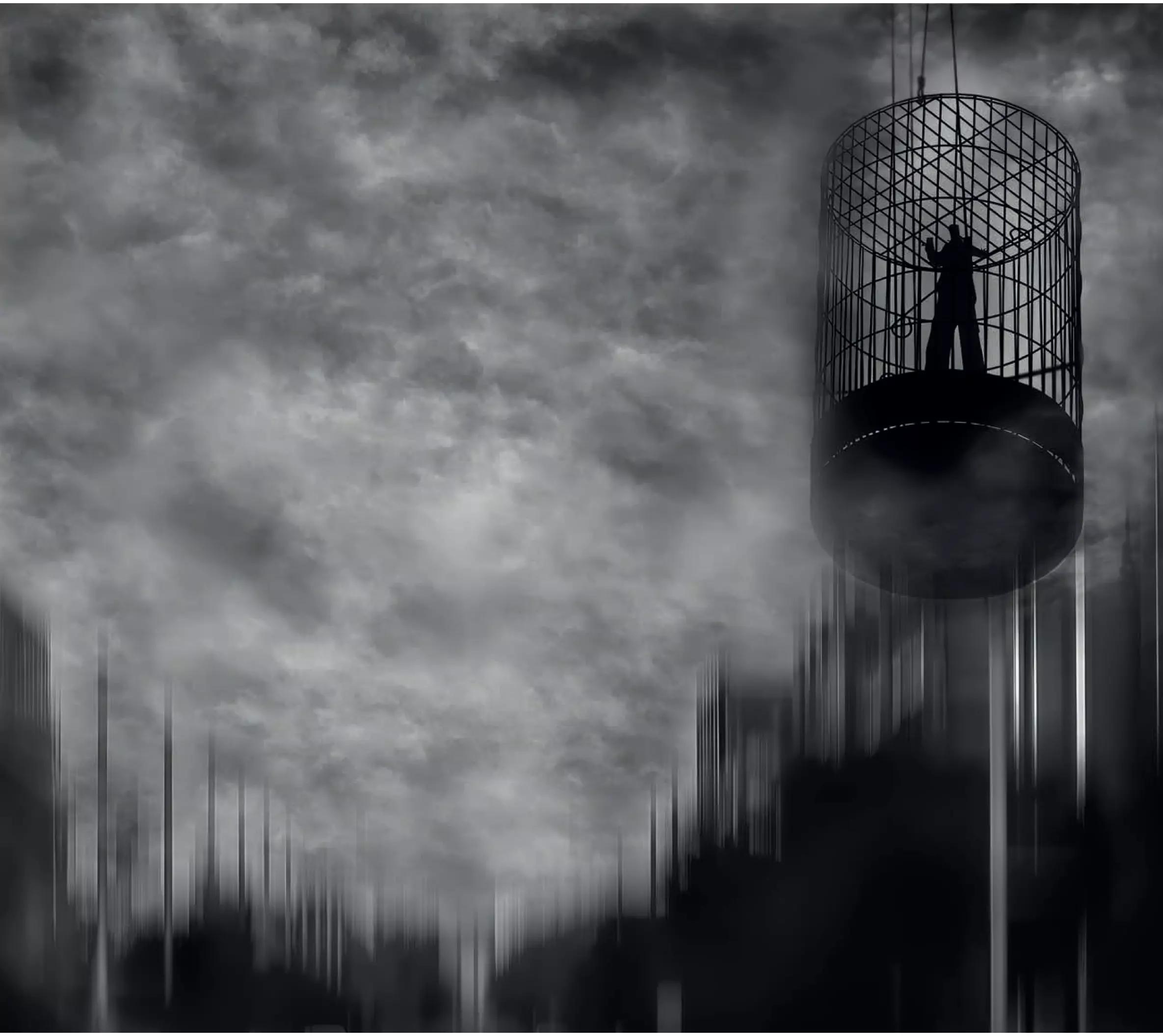

CAROL JERREMS
PORTRAITS

Director of the National Portrait Gallery Bree Pickering, speaks at the November 2024 media preview of the Carol Jerrems: Portraits exhibition.

REVIEW AND LEARN

Exploring the wealth of exhibitions and books available to us can be a great inspiration for your own work.

WITH BRIAN ROPE

I first started writing articles for *Australian Photography* back in January 2017. Since then, I've also written numerous reviews of visual arts exhibitions (mostly focussed on photography) and books for two Canberra regional newspapers, and as a member of the Canberra Critics Circle.

I also publish all those reviews on my personal blog. And, nowadays, many of those reviews are re-published in the APS Print Group's online magazine *The Printer,* issues of which can be downloaded at bit.ly/4hZFkDK.

I am fortunate to live in Canberra, as there are numerous galleries, including several national institution galleries, which means there is a steady stream of exhibitions to visit and review.

In fact, just in the last three months, there have been two excellent shows at the National Portrait Gallery (NPG) – including a major retrospective of Carol Jerrems' portraits, 20 Years of Australian Geographic's Nature Photographer of the Year at the National Archives of Australia, and nine other varied exhibitions at other galleries – all of which I have seen and written about.

The opportunities to review books are less frequent. However, in the same three months, there have been two major and significant books that I have enjoyed. Firstly, *Max Dupain – A Portrait* by Helen Ennis, and then *Until Justice Comes* by Juno Gemes, who joined the Friends of APS Contemporary Group Facebook group very recently. And I have also just reviewed an e-Book – *Footsteps and Frames: A Travel Diary of China* by Pele Leung, a member of the APS Facebook group.

You will likely know who Carol Jerrems, Max Dupain and Juno Gemes are and of their significance to the history of Australian photography. If you don't, I encourage you to consider acquiring or borrowing the books mentioned earlier.

There is also a book *Carol Jerrems: Portraits* which the NPG has published. Whilst Pele Leung is not in the same category, his 472-page e-Book is also well worth checking out (and for just the cost of a large cup of coffee!).

I find it fascinating how Jerrems' intimate portraits shaped Australian visual culture, and how Dupain's creativity with his photography motivated him.

At the same time, Gemes' visual uncovering of the often-invisible history of Australia's First Nations people, through her 50 years documenting the changing social landscape of our nation – in particular the lives and struggles of Aboriginal Australians – is a vital part of our history.

I also enjoyed immersing myself in Leung's comprehensive story of more than 20 trips to mainland China and Taiwan.

The other great advantage of exploring exhibitions and books such as these is what it brings to your own photography, and how it can help you decide where you want to go with it. ✪

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A not for profit organisation catering to enthusiasts, amateurs and professionals in photography.

Image: “Secretary Bird Swallowing” by Johan J Botha FAPS EFIAP ARPS SPSA - GOLD Medal - APS National -Nature 2024

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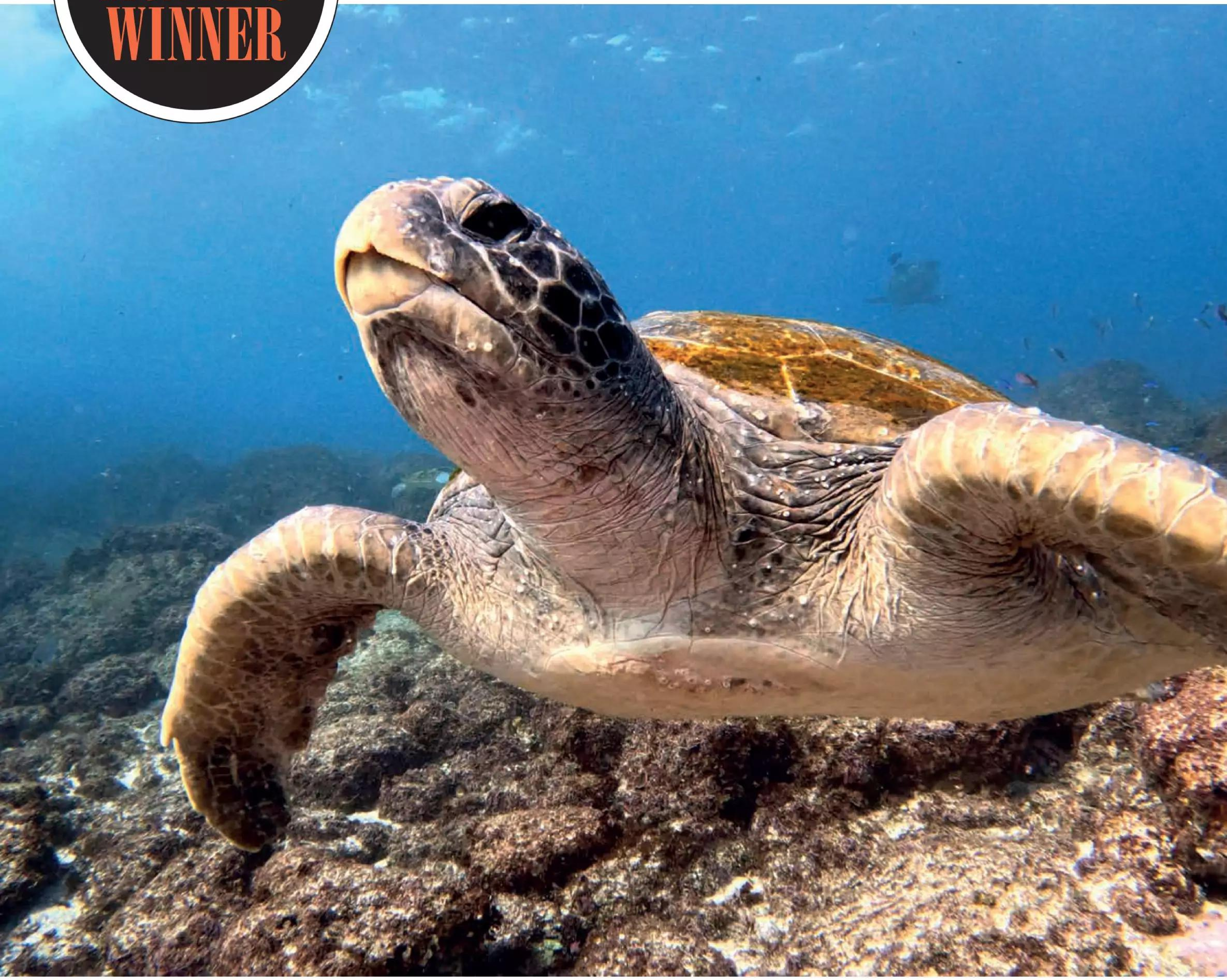
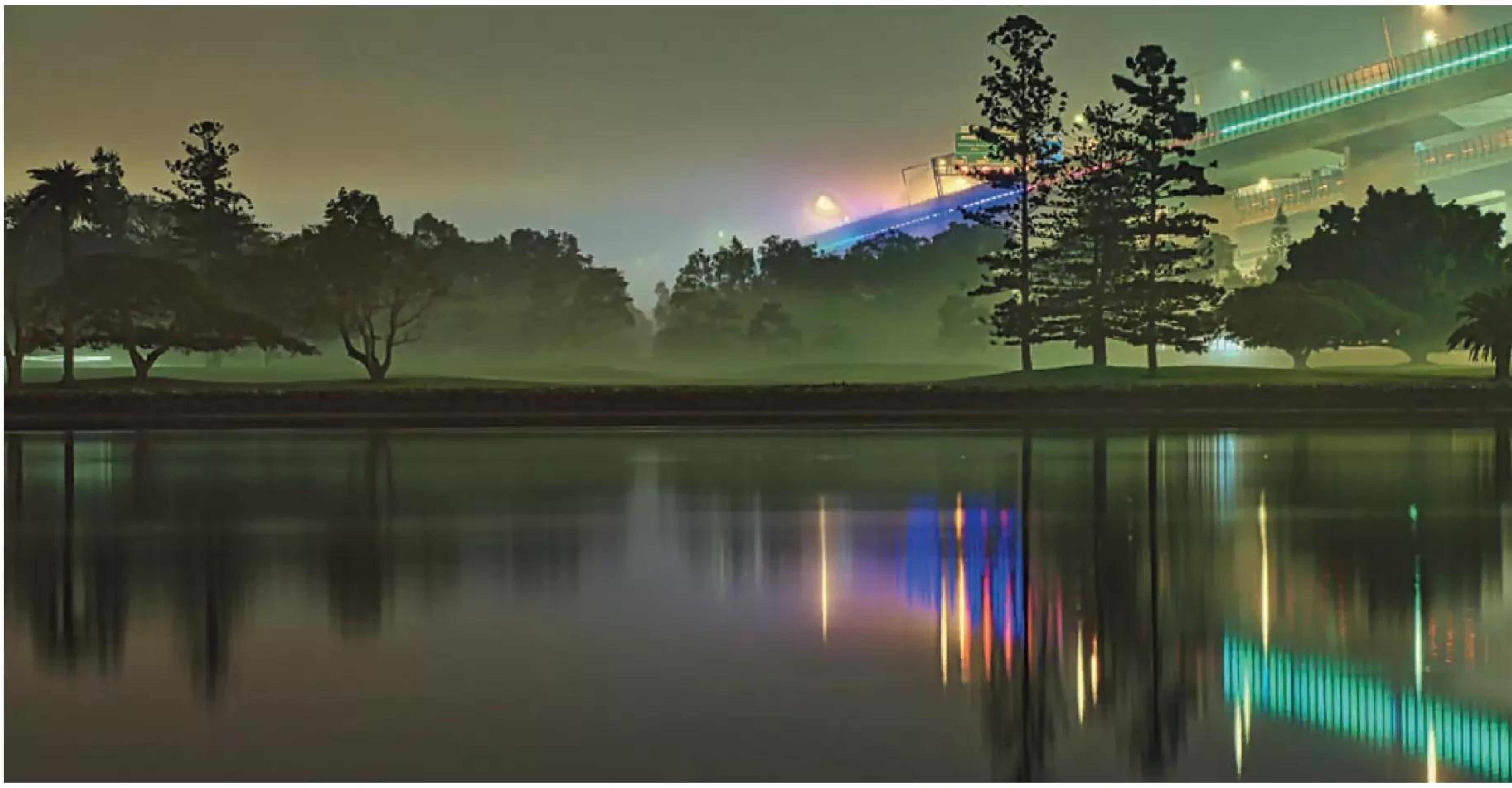
IMAGE DOCTOR

Images need a pick-me-up? The doctor will see you now.

BY ANTHONY MCKEE

THIS MONTH'S WINNER





KNOW WHEN TO HOLD 'EM

"I have visited the Gateway Bridge on a number of occasions and each time find a different angle for which to photograph it. My habit has been to arrive in the dark and document the changes as the sun rises on this simple structure using a long shutter speed and low ISO to capture the silky feeling in this image. Today's image was taken as a fog bank swept down the river and eventually completely obliterated the view. The image required only minor editing to the lightness and cropping."

ANTHONY'S TIP: Hi Robert, in many ways, photo opportunities are like poker hands – it's about eliminating what you don't need and making the most of what is remaining. With this image, the first thing I would have eliminated is the road sign in the upper right, and I would have done that by moving a few metres to the right to hide the signs behind those pine trees. This lets you enjoy the structure and lights without that basic distraction. Next, I would use Photoshop to eliminate that small streak of white in the left of the image; chances are this was an early morning cyclist, but unless this white streak was travelling all the way across the centre of the image, it is not much more than another distraction. Otherwise, keep exploring!

TITLE: Morning Glory 7
PHOTOGRAPHER: Robert Vallance
DETAILS: Fujifilm X-T3, 18-135mm lens @ 83mm. 30s @ f13, ISO 80.

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

"I took this photo of a green sea turtle using a GoPro 11, whilst diving at the stunning South Solitary Marine Park near Coffs Harbour NSW. Green sea turtles can be very curious at times and this one was keen to come in close for a look and a little scratch."

ANTHONY'S TIP: Hi Steve, this is a great image, and overall there is not a lot I would do to change the composition or the overall exposure. What I think can he improved though, is the "noise" that we can see in the photo. Sensor noise is a frequent problem with small sensor cameras working in low light, which is why most photographers prefer full-frame cameras when shooting in low light work. But buying an underwater housing for a full-frame camera is not only expensive (housings often cost more than the cameras) but camera housings can also be challenging to work with. Larger cameras also have a shallower depth-of-field, so unlike this image, you might not get those fish and that other turtle in the background in focus.

I would keep shooting with the GoPro, but I would invest in some noise reduction software such as Topaz DeNoise AI to soften the noise in your images. I think you will find it can make a noticeable difference, and make your images even more appealing. Keep at it!

TITLE: Green Sea Turtle
PHOTOGRAPHER: Steven Breese
DETAILS: Go Pro 11 with underwater casing. Exposure unrecorded.

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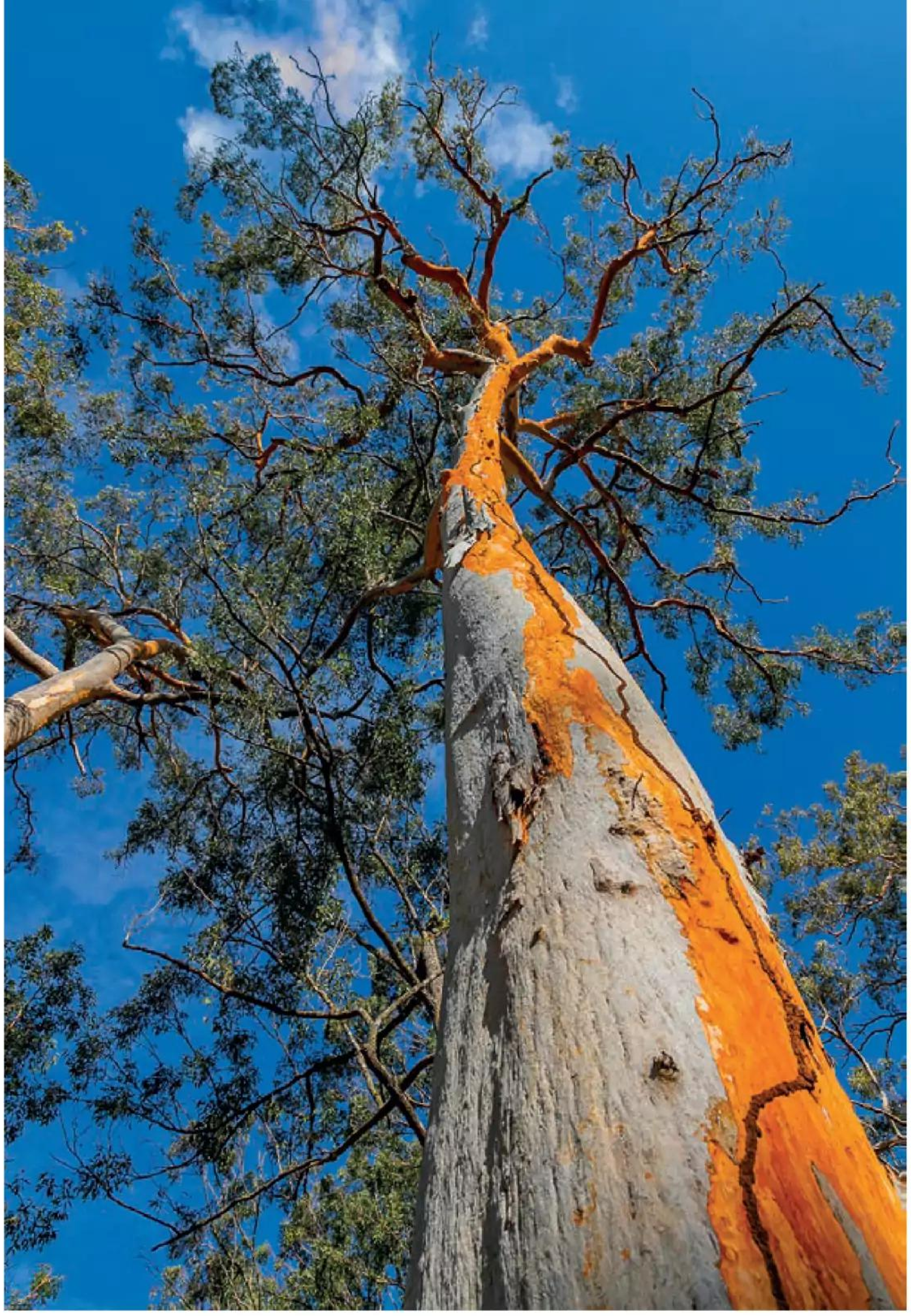


QUITE THE SUBJECT!

"Three years ago I moved from South Africa (where I had spent 30 years working as a firefighting pilot) to Australia. I know trees but I have never seen gum trees as big and plentiful as here on the Australian East coast. This one caught my eye and although I was late for a meeting I had to stop and try and create a picture."

ANTHONY'S TIP: Hi Rob, and yes, I agree, capturing good photographs when you see them is far more important than any meeting (although try explaining that to the boss!). This is a good capture and I like the balance of yellow against the blue sky. What I do find distracting though, is that bright tree trunk in the left of the frame. For this reason I would be inclined to crop the left of the image by about 20 per cent, and the right of the image by about 10 per cent (just to restore balance to the composition). This will convert the image into a rather tall, slender panoramic style image, but if you were to print it rather large, it would look rather striking on a suitable wall space!

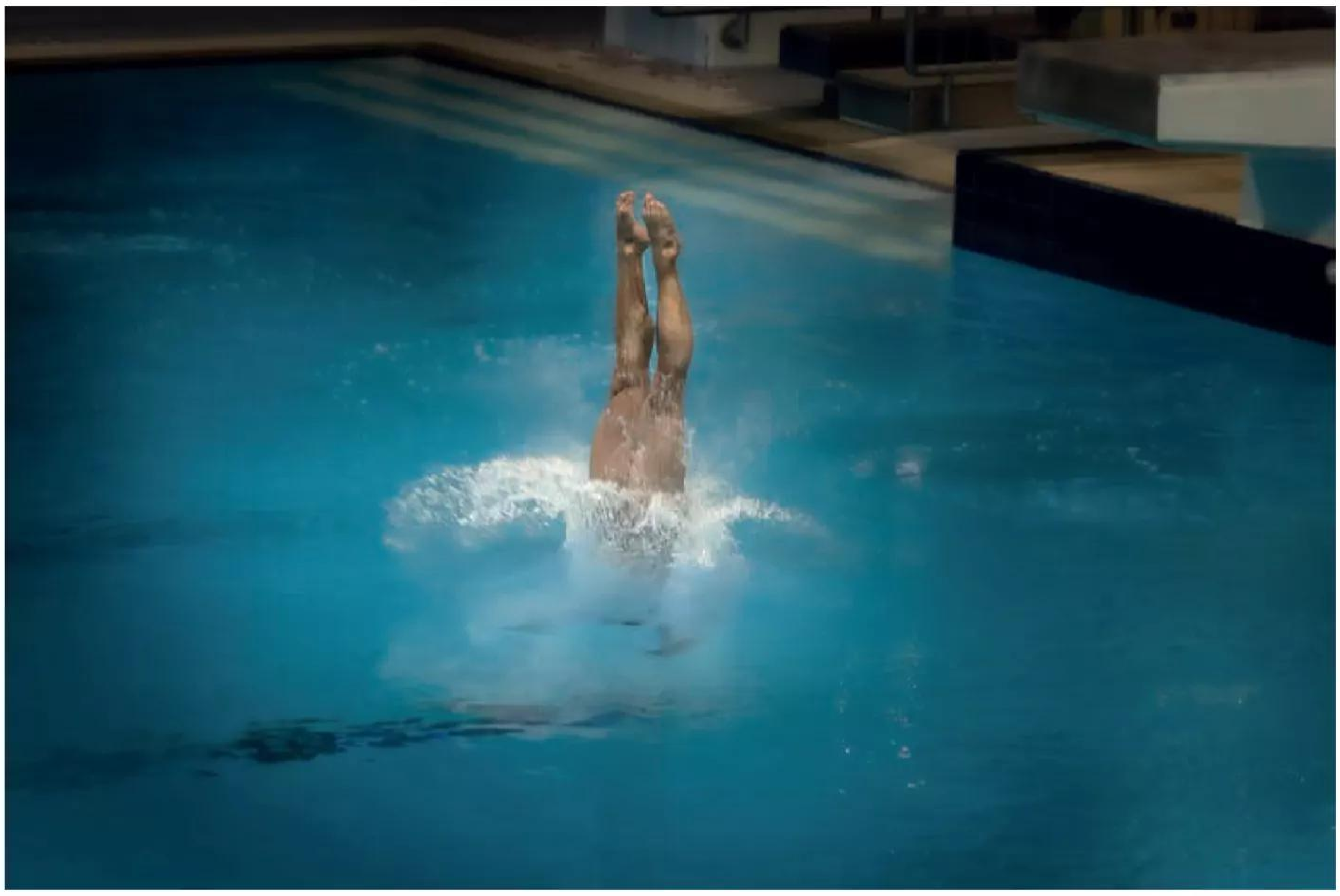
As a pilot, you are probably very familiar with geotagging locations and so I would make a note of where trees like this are so that you can revisit them again in the future. This tree could be your new muse! Happy landings!

TITLE: Gum tree No.2
PHOTOGRAPHER: Rob Taylor
DETAILS: Canon 6D Mk II, Canon EF 24-105mm lens @ 24mm. 1/320s @ f9, ISO 320.

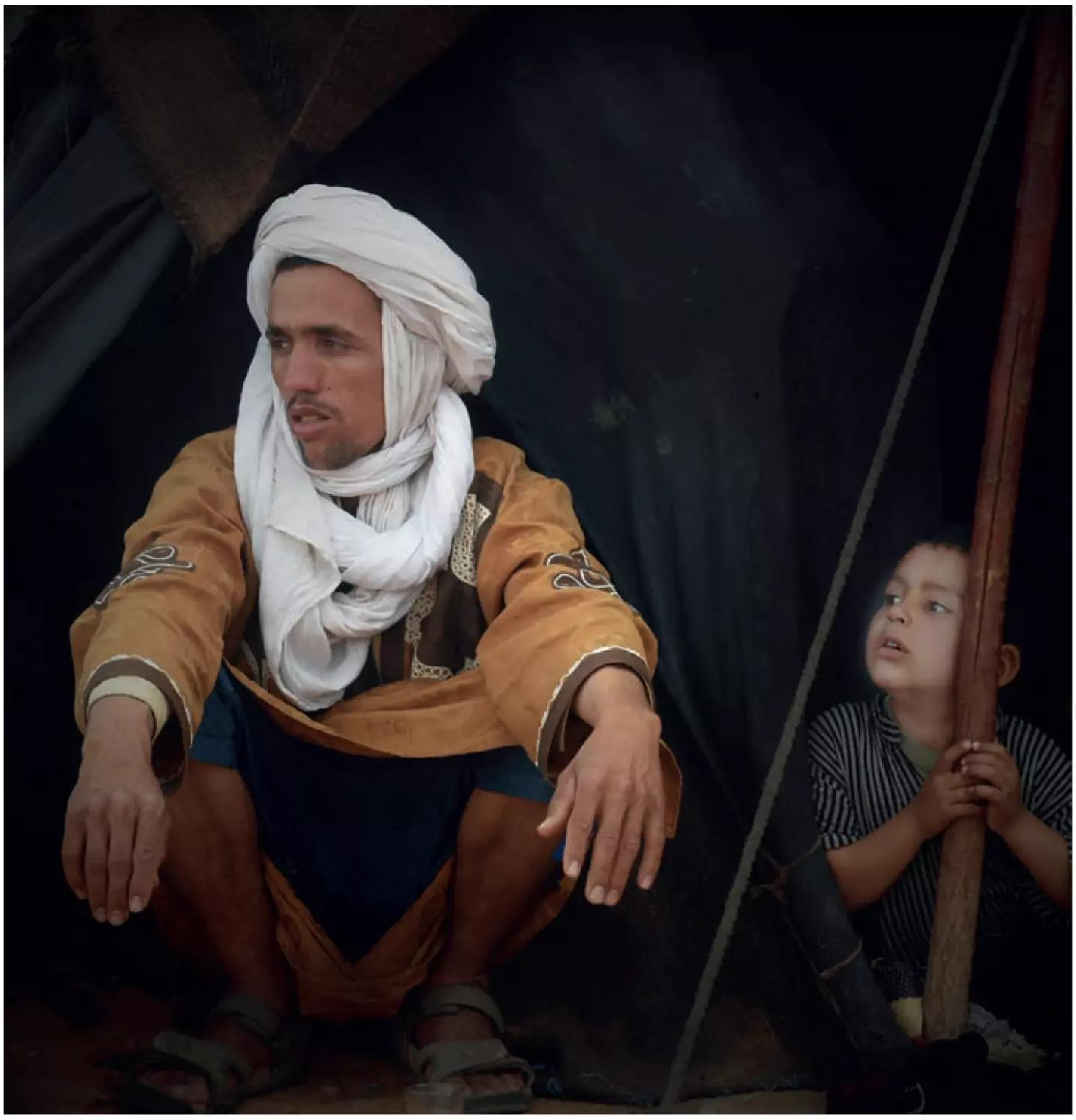
COULD YOU GO VERTICAL?

"I took this shot at a national diving championship but rather than focus on the whole diver I decided to try something different and see what I could achieve when the diver entered the water. After many shots to get the timing right I liked this one. It was cropped and some adjustments made via Lightroom."

ANTHONY'S TIP: Hi Steven, I've always been rather cynical of cameras with super fast motor-drives, but they do come in useful when you are trying to capture action like this. Overall, the capture is great, the toes of the diver are perfectly sharp, and you get a sense of the motion from the moving water droplets. What I would have preferred to see with this image though, is a vertical crop. Horizontal images are typically very passive, but a vertical image usually has more strength. More so, a vertical image would also imply a sense of where this diver has come from. And for bonus points, I would love to have seen other competitors or coaches in the back of the shot; yes, we do want to eliminate distractions from an image, but sometimes other elements can be useful in helping to tell the story (or create some interesting juxtapositions). Something to try at the next National Champs!



TITLE: Untitled
PHOTOGRAPHER: Steven Genesin
DETAILS: Olympus O-M1, Olympus 100-400mm lens @ 100mm. 1/1000s @ f5, ISO 2000.



OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE

"One evening while touring the Moroccan desert we stopped at a camp of nomads. I was drawn to this man in a tent but it was only when his son came over that I realised I had something special. To me it tells so many stories, the father keeping lookout, perhaps looking to the future, the son imitating his father. I have cropped the image and darkened the background. I was concerned the tent rope might split the image, I left it in and darkened it. I am quite confident in landscapes and abstracts but portraits are outside my comfort zone and I would appreciate any advice to improve this image."

ANTHONY'S TIP: Hi Howard, portrait photography is a challenging discipline, in part because most of us get very self-conscious whenever we point a camera at another person. What matters though, is how we engage with people in those moments. A soft smile, a gentle hand up to say "wait", and then some decisive moments with the camera.

You have captured a gentle moment with these two; they seem comfortable with your presence, but my feeling is that you have cropped the image too tight. Ideally I would like to see more at the bottom of the image (so we can see their feet and that coffee glass) and I would like to see more to the boy's elbow. Otherwise, this is a good effort. Well done.

TITLE: Father & Son
PHOTOGRAPHER: Howard Moutrie (NSW)
DETAILS: Nikon D7200, Nikon 18-135 lens @ 62mm. 1/125s @ f5, ISO 400.

WIN!

12 MONTH SUBSCRIPTION TO AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHY OR CAPTURE MAGAZINE

Congratulations to Steven Breese who has won a 12-month subscription to either *Australian Photography* or *Capture* magazine for taking out Image Doctor this month! *AP* has been celebrating the work of Australian photographers for more than 70 years. Published quarterly, *Capture* is Australia's leading journal for emerging and professional photographers.

Find out more about AP at australianphotography.com, and Capture at capturemag.com.au.

HOW TO SUBMIT AN IMAGE

- Email entries to: imagedoctor@australianphotography.com with "Image Doctor" in the subject line.
- Include your name, image title and up to 150 words about how you created it.
- Only one image per person per month.
- Images must be saved in JPEG format. Maximum file size is 5MB. Include your name in the filename of the image.
- An Australian address is required in order to receive the prize.
- Employees of Yaffa Publishing or the sponsor are not eligible to win the prize.
- The editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

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Photo credit | **'Resting assassin' (Robberfly) by Jamee van den Brink** | Jamee works at Toowoomba Camera House and he created this amazing photo with a Canon 90D camera + Canon EF 100mm macro lens | **Image details** f/2.8 | Shutter 1/160 | Aperture f/8 | ISO 4000.

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